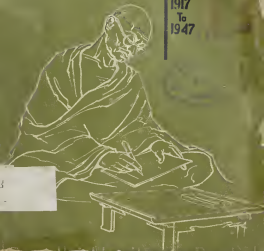
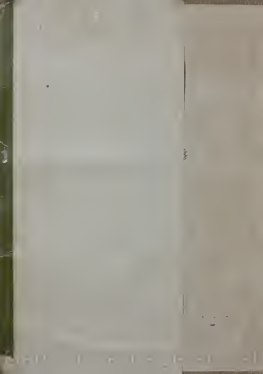


WRITINGS AND SPEECHES  
OF  
**GANDHIJI**  
RELATING TO BIHAR

FROM  
1917  
To  
1947



By Dr K. K. DATTA



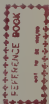




6902















WRITINGS AND SPEECHES OF  
MAHATMA GANDHI RELATING TO  
BIHAR, 1917-1947

Edited with an Introduction

By

DR. K. K. DATTA,  
*Principal, Patna College*



10 FEB 1959

PUBLISHED BY  
THE GOVERNMENT OF BIHAR

Published by the Government of Bihar, Patna  
March, 1960

15.3.4673  
6902  
All Rights Reserved

*Gandhi's writings and speeches reproduced  
with the permission of the Hindustan Times,  
P O Newspan Ahmedabad-14.*



6 DEC 1960

Price Rs 12 (Rupees Twelve only) per copy  
PRINTED BY J. BARRETT, S J., SANGHAN PRESS, DIGHA GHAT, PATNA.

# CONTENTS

Page

Foreword by Dr. S. K. Sinha, Chief Minister of Bihar . . . . .	I
Author's Preface . . . . .	II
Glossary . . . . .	III
Introduction . . . . .	1-70

## Session

1. The Champaran Mission, 1917-18 . . . . .	71-142
2. The Non-Co-operation Movement . . . . .	142-170
3. Constructive Activities, 1925-29 . . . . .	171-240
4. Tour during the Earthquake Tragedy and also for Harijan Uplift . . . . .	241-254
5. Brindaban Session of the Gandhi Seva Sangh (1939) . . . . .	255-259
6. Ramgarh Congress . . . . .	260-267
7. Messages of Peace and Harmony in the Crucial Years, 1946-47 . . . . .	268-329
Index . . . . .	330-341



# ILLUSTRATIONS

	<i>Page.</i>
1. Mahatma Gandhi in Champaran in 1917 ...	97
2. Shri Rajendra Prasad, Anugraha Narayan Sinha, Ramuaram Prasad and Sambhusaran Verma ...	113
3. Shri Shri Krishna Senha engaged in spinning ...	160
4. Mahatma Gandhi at Chaibasa with Dr. Rajendra Prasad and some local leaders ...	193
5. Congress leaders at the Hajipur Ashram breaking salt laws in 1930 ...	240
6. Reception to Sri Vinodghosari Pd. Verma on his release from the Hazaribagh Jail ...	240
7. Mahatma Gandhi with Shri Rajendra Prasad at Hajipur in 1934 ...	248
8. Mahatma Gandhi with Mathura Prasad alighting from the train at Brindaban in 1939 ...	248
9. Mahatma Gandhi comes out of the residence of Shri Mahesh Pd. Sinha at Muzaffarpur in 1934. ...	248
10. During debates and at the Exhibition of the Rangarh Congress ...	264
11. At the A. I. V. I. A. Exhibition, Rangarh Congress ...	264
12. Mahatma Gandhi visiting a ruined village in Masaurhi P. S. in 1947 ...	272
13. Mahatma Gandhi at Kumhar with Prof. Abdul Bui in 1947 ...	272
14. Mahatma Gandhi in Bihar in 1947 ...	272
15. Mahatma Gandhi visiting the inner portion of a ruined house in Masaurhi P. S. ...	272
16. Mahatma Gandhi and Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan ...	288
17. Mahatma Gandhi after a prayer meeting at Masaurhi ...	288
18. Mahatma Gandhi and Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan at a prayer meeting at Masaurhi ...	288





## FOREWORD

About three years back Dr. K.K. Datta, Principal, Patna College, produced a monumental work on the history of Freedom Movement in Bihar in three volumes. In this volume he has carefully edited the writings and speeches of Mahatma Gandhi relating to Bihar from 1917 to 1947, by collecting these with considerable industry from different sources. As the author has rightly pointed out, both these years are 'highly significant' in the history of the Indian national movement, in the different phases of which Bihar's role has been heroic and inspiring. In the year 1917, Mahatma Gandhi undertook a mission into Champaran in response to the requests of its people, who were groaning under the united pressure of oppression and misery due to the tyranny of the indigo planters. By noble dedication to the cause of truth and justice, Mahatma Gandhi not only relieved the poor peasants of various iniquitous burdens but also gave a new turn to the course of Indian nationalism. He started in Champaran new experiments of real social service and rural education, for the amelioration of the down-trodden and afflicted people. Champaran, in fact, proved to be the nursery of India's new nationalism. In the year 1947 India attained the brilliant consummation of her national goal under the leadership of this great prophet of the modern world. Bihar, by virtue of her selfless services and numerous sacrifices for the cause of nationalism, endeared herself to Mahatmaji, who claimed this historic land as 'my beloved Bihar' and visited it on several occasions giving thereby added impetus to its peoples' zeal and determination in their undaunted fight for the country's freedom.

The writings and speeches of Mahatma Gandhi concerning Bihar, during the different periods of national struggle, are priceless legacies for the citizens of free India, and for humanity at large. They form a marvellous source of knowledge and inspiration. By their collection and editing with a critical Introduction, Dr. Datta has rendered a valuable service to the State of Bihar, for which he deserves our sincere congratulations.

S. K. Sinha,

Chief Minister's Secretariat,  
Patna.



## PREFACE

This volume contains the writings and speeches of Mahatma Gandhi relating to Bihar in the period extending from 1917 to 1947. Both the years are significant landmarks in the history of modern India. The year 1917 saw the birth of some new forces of nationalism on the soil of Bihar which, in spite of Himalayan handicaps, continued to make headway under the spiritual leadership of Mahatma Gandhi through various trials, tribulations and tears of the teeming millions, till the country attained independence in 1947. The message of Mahatma Gandhi has a great meaning for all generations of humanity. His ideals should serve as the truest beacon light for the onward march of the world on right lines. In this humble work of mine, I have tried to put together his inspiring writings and speeches about Bihar in these eventful years.

I am profoundly indebted to Dr. S. K. Sinha, Chief Minister of Bihar, and to his Government, for their very great kindness in affording me considerable encouragement and all possible facilities in the matter of collecting the materials for this work and for its publication. With his unbounded affection and generosity for those who devote themselves to the cause of learning, Dr. S. K. Sinha has further laid me under a deep debt of gratitude by writing a Foreword to the volume. My thanks are due to the authorities of the Navajivan Trust, Ahmedabad, for their kind permission to reproduce the writings of Mahatma Gandhi in this work. I must also thank Shri Kumed Ranjan Chatterjee of Patna for supplying me with copies of some rare and old photographs, which have appeared here as illustrations, and my old pupils, Shri Surendra Gopal, M. A., Lecturer in History, Patna College, Sri Ramchandra Jha, M. A., Lecturer in History, B. N. College, and Shri Somnath Roy, M. A., for the assistance they rendered to me in correcting the proofs and preparing the Index.

PATNA UNIVERSITY,  
PATNA, INDIA

K. K. Datta



# GLOSSARY

## A

- Aikash*—Cross, Impose  
*Aikash*—Non-Violence  
*Aik*—Cousin  
*Aids*—Subordinate officers or agents  
*Amor-ol-Ulma*—Light of (Chief among) the Ulmas (Clergy)  
*Arat*—A ceremony performed by offering lamps and some other sacred things  
*Ausamur*—Revenue settlements made with the proprietor in detail, a system of indigo cultivation  
*Aust*—Collector of revenues  
*Aze*—Call for prayer of the (Muslims)

## B

- Bagi*—Carnage drawn by a pair of horses  
*Baj*—a nom—Residuary contract  
*Bercht*—A menial servant, Runner  
*Berkashgo*—Mischickmen, Guards  
*Ber*—Market  
*Befere*—Foreigner  
*Begen*—Forced labour  
*Bek Begen*—<sup>a</sup>  
*Bemur Chodor*—Bemur-made wrapper or bed sheet  
*Bigan*—Devotional song  
*Bhade*—Straw  
*Bigh*—A unit of land measurement  
*Budmash*—Bad Characters, Vagrants  
*Budshah*—Settlement  
*Budshah Bignad* *Patawrya*—Settlement to be made by the Patawri (see under Patawri)

## C

- Chakstare*—Razed platform  
*Chorde*—Handloom.

- Chene Mohel*—a kind of coin  
*Chinkeder*—Watchmen, Police watchmen  
*Chushiden*—Duty of a watchman  
*Cutchenar* (*Katchen*)—Court Public office for receipt of revenue

## D

- Defeder*—An officer corresponding to the rank of a Sergeant  
*Dek* (*Dard*)—Post for the conveyance of letters  
*Demin*—*Dek*—Skirts of the Hills  
*Dekker*—Hall of audience  
*Dekker*—Sight, Interview  
*Denge*—Inspector of Palace, Head of an office  
*Dester*—Customary dues or perquisites paid to servants  
*Daster-ol-Amal*—Code of instructions for revenue officers  
*Daudal*—Unit of measurement  
*Demon-Pye*—A religious festival  
*Debat*—Interior rural parts  
*Desh Mohel*—Threshold of a palace  
*Dhara Abe*—Father of the world  
*Dron*—Steward, Superintendent of lands and the collection of revenue  
*Durbhari Manzur*—Fetters accepted

## E

- Ebbe*—Hackney-carriage  
*Ebbawale*—Driver of a hackney carriage  
*Eiba*—Specified area  
*Ekar*—Religious mendicant, Devotee  
*Erkash*—A kind of coin  
*Ertaw*—Religious edict, Decree  
*Ermen*—Royal order or deed of grant  
*Ergader court*—Criminal court  
*Ergader Nager*—Office Superintendent of Criminal Court

G

*Gauḍa*—An aggregate of four  
*Ghat*—Landing place  
*Gumasta*—An agent

H

*Haj*—Pilgrimage to the holy cities of  
 Mecca and Medina  
*Hajai*—Police lock-up  
*Hakim*—Physician  
*Huṣṣa*—Intoxicant drink  
*Hatol*—Strike  
*Hat*—Market-place, Mart  
*Hast*—Account  
*Hakumat*—Overlordship  
*Hakumamat*—Order  
*Hade*—Settlement of unprofitable  
 land to swilling tenants at  
 exorbitant rates

I

*Ijara*—Contract  
*Ijty (Ijty)*—Court or office  
*Ijnd*—Joint occupancy  
*Iktadar*—Person responsible for  
 payment of village rent  
*Ijty*—Resignation, Surrender  
*Ijty Bandobast*—Settlement after  
 surrender.

J

*Jama*—Amount of assessment  
*Jamabandi*—Settlement and accounts  
 of revenue  
*Jamadar*—A subordinate Police  
 officer  
*Jhal*—Religious War

K

*Kabuliyat*—Deed of Acceptance  
*Katta*—Unit of land measurement  
 (1320 of a bigha)  
*Khat*—Handmade clothes  
*Khatwat*—Flattery  
*Kharai*—stack of chaff  
*Khatir*—Record of Rights  
*Khas*—Cultivation  
*Kut*—Entailment

*Koti*—A small pucca building,  
 Factory or warehouse,  
*Kushti*—A system of land tenure  
*Kirani*—A system of land tenure

L

*Leggi*—Bamboo pole  
*Lahi*—Made of iron

M

*Makana*—Money-lender  
*Makda*—Field  
*Malik*—Proprietor  
*Mirak*—the 12th Imam of the Shias  
*Masud*—Throne  
*Maharaj*—Sovereign, Lord  
*Marta*—Religious formulae, incan-  
 tations  
*Makalla*—A ward or section of a town  
*Miyani*—Interior area  
*Makawari*—Fixed tenure in per-  
 petuity  
*Musammat*—Prefix of a female  
*Mirga*—Village  
*Makhar*—A person authorized to  
 act or plead for some one  
 else  
*Mandi*—Wren, clerk  
*Margkhana*—Chicken-house  
*Mutha*—A system of collection in  
 kind

N

*Nab Dargi*—Deputy Inspector of  
 Police  
*Nab Hakim Allah*—Deputy to the  
 Supreme Officer.  
*Najib*—Volunteer Guards.

O

*Onkar* ((*Undhar*))—Candidate,  
 Applicant

P

*Paca*—Ball of concrete and bricks  
*Pahi*—Palm-quin  
*Pada*—Prest  
*Parwana*—Order  
*Pargana*—An administrative division

*Path*—Portion or share of a village  
*Pathdar*—Holder of a share in a coparcenary tenure  
*Path*—Fallow uncultivated  
*Perda*—Veil  
*Prekarak*—Preachers  
*Panchayat*—Council of five persons  
*Petson*—Accountant (Village)  
*Preddat*—Literally footman, peon.  
*Phirangpa*—(Feringpa) European.

Q

*Qanda*—A long ode of eulogy  
*Q*  
*Qablat* (*Qabwat*)—Proceedings (of a case)  
*Qablat*—Persons  
*Qand*—Provision, Stores of grain.

R

*Rah*—Gentleman  
*Raham*—Salutation  
*Rahayay*—Commander-in-Chief  
*Rah Raham*—Salutation, Sir  
*Rahyan*—Hermit, Recluse, Mendicant  
*Raharak*—Managing agent  
*Rahat*—Chiefdomship  
*Rah*—Deed of Contract or Agreement  
*Raharak*—Peaceful non-co-operation  
*Rahdar*—Office clerk  
*Rah Raham*—Social Service unit  
*Raham*—Canopy  
*Rahat*—Sweet drink  
*Raharak*—Enhanced rent  
*Rah*—Government  
*Rahat*—Soldier, guard

*Rahdar*—Graduate  
*Rah*—Mounted soldier  
*Rahdar*—Governor of a *sab* (province)  
*Rahat*—Reconversion to one's own religion

T

*Tahat*—Propagation of faith  
*Tahdar*—Collector of revenue  
*Tahat*—Daily wages  
*Tahat*—Hackney carriage  
*Tahat*—Proxy  
*Tahat*—Fine, Demurrage  
*Tahat*—Sub-mountainous region  
*Tahat*—(Tihka)—Contract, Farm  
*Tahat*—A system of land tenure in which the tenant was forced to set apart 2 *Kahat* for cultivating certain specified seeds  
*Tahat*—Pilgrimage  
*Tahat*—Police Station  
*Tahdar*—Contractor  
*Tahdar*—Farming, contract  
*Tahdar*—Village functionary  
*Tah*—Part of a village  
*Tah*—A kind of pub

U

*Urah*—Clergy  
*Urah*—Petition

V

*Vahat*—Pleader, Agent

Z

*Zahat*—A system of indigo cultivation  
*Zahat*—Midday, time after the sun has just passed the meridian





## INTRODUCTION

Bihar, the classic land of Indian civilisation, where human genius has unfolded itself in manifold petals age after age, played a heroic and highly significant role in the successive phases of our national struggle till the attainment of freedom. There was a strong undercurrent of discontent in Bihar against the growing British political supremacy even before 1857, which found expression in such events as the Cole rising of 1831 and the Santal Insurrection of 1855-57. Under the leadership of Babu Kunwar Singh, whom the handicap of advanced age or other troubles could not cow down in the least, Bihar threw a gigantic challenge to the British power during the Movement of 1857-59, which assumed here, as a contemporary British officer rightly observed, "the dignity of a national revolt". Bihar was again one of the important centres of the Wahabi Movement, which had as its political object the elimination of foreign rule. The Birsas Movements in Chotanagpur, during the closing years of the 19th century, were directed against the British political authority.

During the earliest period in the history of the Indian National Congress, there "used to be a good deal of enthusiasm in Bihar about it and large number of delegates used to attend the meetings of the body." After a comparative lack of interest for a few years, the zealous efforts of some enlightened leaders of the Province, who had in these days their faith in the liberal creed of the Congress, resulted in an improvement in the situation. In 1908, a Bihar Provincial Congress Committee was formed with its headquarters at Patna and branches in the districts. The Provincial Congress Committee organised a Provincial Political Conference, which had as its delegates Congressmen of the Province as well as others, who, without formally joining the Congress, were in agreement with the former on general matters of provincial interest. The first session of the Bihar Provincial Conference met at Patna early in 1908 under the Presidentship of Sir Ali Imam. Shri Mazharul Haque,

a patriot of exemplary character with a record of considerable sacrifices for the cause of freedom, played an important part in it. Largely through the efforts of another contemporary national leader of Bihar, Shri Deep Narayan Singh of Bhagalpur, the second session of the Bihar Provincial Conference was held at that city under the Presidentship of Dr. S. Sinha, an eminent soul of Bihar and one of the illustrious representatives of the liberal school of statesmen of those days. It is gratifying to recall that while an alien Government was, in pursuance of its own policy of divide and rule, seeking to foster communal separation in India, particularly from 1905, Bihar presented "a unique spectacle, in the whole of India, of Muslims and non-Muslims working shoulder to shoulder in complete harmony, inspired by common ideals and inspiration." The Indian National Congress held its twenty-seventh session at Patna in 1912, a year of great significance in the history of Bihar for its emergence as a separate Province, destined to play a glorious role in the history of Indian nationalism.

Bihar felt the influence of Revolutionary Nationalism during the early years of the twentieth century and also of the Home Rule Movement, sponsored by Mrs. Annie Besant.

But it was with the advent of Mahatma Gandhi in Bihar in 1917, in response to the earnest appeals of the oppressed *ryots* of Champaran, that this historic land received a unique inspiration to march forward boldly in the fight for the country's freedom and for eradication of the manifold ills from which its people had been long suffering. Indeed, Champaran proved to be the veritable nursery of India's new nationalism, characterised by its potent appeal to the common man, its emphasis on Truth and Non-violence as the most efficacious means for victory in a noble cause and its programme of socio-economic reforms to ameliorate the condition of the down-trodden masses by complete elimination of accumulated anomalies.

The unsophisticated, simple but poor peasants of North Bihar had a very hard lot under the highly iniquitous

systems<sup>1</sup> of indigo cultivation carried on there by the European indigo planters. These served the maximum interests of the indigo planters at the cost of the peasants, who groaned under the weight of oppression and misery. Coercion on them for converting their lands into indigo-producing fields, exaction of forced labour from them under all kinds of threat, extremely meagre payment and often no payment at all, and forcible realisation of heavy fines were some of the notorious features of the grinding systems. The earlier efforts of the peasants to save themselves from the oppressions of the planters proved abortive due to the influence of the latter. Their occasional protests and cries for protection mingled with the air. Their deliverance came at last through a great moral force, generated by the mission of Mahatma Gandhi, in the fulfillment of which he received unstinted and most loyal co-operation from Dr. Rajendra Prasad, Acharya J.B. Kripalani (then a Professor at the G.B.B. College, Muzaffarpur), Dr. Anugraha Narayan Sinha, Shri Sambhu Saran Varma, Shri Gorakh Prasad, Shri Ramnaram Prasad, Shri Janakdhari Prasad, Shri Vidyabacani Prasad and some others.

Mahatma Gandhi's attention to the genuine grievances of the Bihar peasants was drawn by the brave peasant leader, Shri Rajkumar Shukla, during the Lucknow session of the Indian National Congress in December, 1916. At this Congress, Shri Braj Kishore Prasad, the veteran national leader of Bihar, whom Mahatma Gandhi described as the soul of public life in the Province, moved a resolution to urge upon the Government the "desirability of appointing a mixed Committee of officials and non-officials to enquire into the agrarian trouble and the strained relations between the indigo ryots and the European planters and to suggest remedies therefor." The resolution was seconded by Shri Arilokan Singh, a pleader of Muzaffarpur, and supported enthusiastically by Shri Raj Kumar Shukla.

After the Congress had unanimously accepted this reso-

1. *Tikabdhia, Zamat, Anammar, Khakh.* For details vide my *History of Freedom Movement in Bihar*, Vol. I, pp. 167-192.

lution, the Bihar delegates, and Shri Raj Kumar Shukla in particular, appealed to Mahatma Gandhi to come to Champaran and witness the miseries of the *ryots* there. Mahatma Gandhi promised to tour Champaran in March or April next. On the 3rd April, Mahatma Gandhi telegraphed to Shri Raj Kumar Shukla requesting him to meet him at the residence of Shri Bhupendra Nath Basu in Calcutta, where he was going soon. On receiving this telegram Shri Raj Kumar Shukla proceeded to Calcutta and met Mahatma Gandhi there. Mahatma Gandhi left Calcutta on the 9th April, 1917, and reached Patna next morning in the company of Shri Raj Kumar Shukla. The same night both of them proceeded to Muzaffarpur. From Muzaffarpur, Mahatma Gandhi went to Motihari and some other localities, including several villages, to enquire personally into the conditions of the *ryots*. Attracted by his magnetic personality, large number of *ryots* came to him in batches and he recorded their statements<sup>1</sup> with the assistance of his co-workers, while the Government officials sought to restrain and check him through all means at their disposal.

Mahatma Gandhi's work at Champaran is a miracle. The rigours of the bureaucratic steel-frame melted away before his fearless regard for Truth, in strict obedience to what he significantly mentioned as "the higher law of our being, the voice of conscience," and his peaceful methods, divorced from any ostentation, produced marvellous results. On the 21st April, 1917, Mr. W.B. Heycock, the Magistrate of Motihari, sent a written message to him to the effect that the Government had withdrawn the case against him.

At the invitation of the Lt. Governor, Sir Edward Gait, Mahatma Gandhi met him at Ranchi on the 4th June, 1917. This was followed by the appointment of a Committee of Enquiry to investigate into and report on the agrarian conditions in Champaran. Mahatma Gandhi agreed to be a member of this Committee on the conditions that he should have perfect freedom to consult his co-workers during

1. Some volumes of typewritten copies of such statements, found in the *Bihar Panchajith*, Patna have been studied by me.

the enquiry, that by being a member of this Committee he did not cease to be the *ryot*'s advocate, and that in case the outcome of the enquiry did not prove satisfactory he "should be free to guide and advise the *ryot* as to what line of action they should take." On the recommendations of this Committee, the Champaran Agrarian Bill was passed. It alleviated the long-standing miseries of a vast number of men in Bihar and was a "moral victory of the *ryots*".

The Champaran mission of Mahatma Gandhi is an event of profound significance in human history. It was a noble crusade which freed a vast body of afflicted members of the community of man from the iniquities of a notorious economic system and from grave social injustice. It taught the poor *ryots* fearlessness and regard for honesty, which emboldened them to meet undauntedly the numerous ordeals in the different periods of our fight for freedom.

Purely economic changes, without corresponding educational and social reforms, cannot produce beneficial results of permanent value. As a matter of fact, the general social condition of the uncared for rural folk was far from satisfactory. To effect an improvement in it became also a programme of Mahatma Gandhi's mission. Two grievous maladies, which weighed heavily on the life of the common man, were their colossal and pathetic ignorance and their miserable existence under unhealthy and insanitary conditions. To remove their ignorance, Mahatma Gandhi thought of village education through "right type of teachers." In response to his "public appeal" for teachers, ready to undertake voluntary teaching work, a batch of social service workers, with previous experience of social service activities, came to Bihar from Bombay and Maharashtra. Schools were opened at several places, viz. at Barharwa, situated at a distance of twenty miles to the east of Motihari, at Bhitharwa in the Nepal Terai, at Madhuban and some other places. Besides the volunteers from outside, Babu Dharanidhar of Bihar worked at the Madhuban school by staying there for six months with his wife and children. About 100 boys received education at the Madhuban school, and

about forty girls read in a Girls' school, which was started there. Weaving was introduced at the Barharwa school.

Medical relief and sanitary improvement works were carried on by several volunteers under the guidance of Dr. Dev of the *Servants of India Society*. The selfless zeal of the volunteers created salutary impression on the minds of the village folk, which helped them much to discard their old unhygienic habits and taught them the value of self-help and corporate activities.

We have various contemporary sources for the study of the Champaran episode. There are some writings of Mahatma Gandhi himself, besides state documents, Police reports, newspapers, and biographies and autobiographies of some who were intimately associated with it. This volume contains the writings of Mahatma Gandhi relating to this topic.

A new wave of national enthusiasm swept over the country from 1919-20. On the 28th July, 1920, Mahatma Gandhi announced that Non-Co-operation would be inaugurated from the 1st of August, 1920. By the end of August he moved a resolution for Non-Co-operation at the Gujarat Provincial Conference, and it was passed by an overwhelming majority. Bihar too was forging ahead. At the 12th session of the Bihar Provincial Conference, which met at Bhagalpur on the 28th and 29th August, 1920, under the Presidentship of Dr. Rajendra Prasad, a resolution was passed by an overwhelming majority approving of "the movement of Non-Co-operation inaugurated by Mahatma Gandhi as a perfectly constitutional and effective weapon in the hands of the people." It is highly significant that the Bihar Provincial Conference was "the first, under the inspiration of that veteran and farsighted custodian of our politics, Babu Brajkishore Prasad, to add the attainment of Swaraj to the redress of the Khilafat and Punjab wrongs as one of the objects for which Non-Co-operation was going to be adopted as the method."<sup>1</sup> Soon after this a special session of the Congress, held at Calcutta on 4th-9th September, 1920, adopted the momentous resolution on Non-Co-operation.

1. Dr. Rajendra Prasad, *Mahatma Gandhi and Bihar*, p. 41.

Bihar at once made a splendid and fearless response to this new urge for national deliverance. The visit of Mahatma Gandhi to this Province early in December, 1920, though short and flying, gave a fillip to her awakening. In his Bihar tour, Mahatma Gandhi was accompanied by Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and Maulana Shaukat Ali. He delivered highly inspiring speeches in meetings held at several places<sup>1</sup> and met the students in special gatherings.

The new movement strongly advocated national education in institutions started for this purpose. Under the influence of Mahatma Gandhi's tour in this Province, some national schools sprang up here and some existing schools were nationalised by repudiation of affiliation to the University and refusal to accept grants-in-aid from Government. Mahatma Gandhi himself laid the foundation of a national school at Hajipur.<sup>2</sup> It was also due to Mahatma Gandhi's advice, encouragement and material assistance in the shape of a fund of seven or eight thousand rupees then collected by him in Bihar, that the *Bihar National College* was started on the 5th January, 1921 "with the object of providing instruction to the students who are withdrawing from Government and Government-controlled institutions and with a view to providing education on sound lines to the young men of the Province, to prepare them for service to the country, as also to give them instructions of a practical nature to enable them to earn their livelihood." The formal opening of the *Bihar National College* and the *Bihar Vidyapeeth* was performed by Mahatma Gandhi on the 6th February, 1921, when he came to Patna from Calcutta, accompanied by Shrinmati Kasturba and Muhammad Ali.<sup>3</sup> The *Bihar Vidy-*

1. At Phulwari near Patna in the morning of the 2nd December, and also in the evening of that day in the compound of Shri Madhukul Haque's house at Patna; at Arrah on the 4th December; at Gaya on the 5th December; at Chapra on the 6th December; at Benish on the 8th December.

2. *Young India*, 22nd December, 1920.

3. Mahatma Gandhi and Maulana Muhammad Ali addressed a meeting at the Madana Mosque, Patna City, at 4 P.M. on the 6th February, 1921.

just was "to co-ordinate the activities of all the national institutions that were springing up in the Province and to control and guide them."

In his inaugural speech on this occasion Mahatma Gandhi referred to the prevalence of the wonderful cordiality between his two Champaran co-workers, Dr. Rajendra Prasad and Babu Baji Kishore Prasad, exhorted the Professors to emulate the great ideals of the sages of this ancient land, and asked the students to mould themselves in such a manner as to make their institutions models for others to follow. In conclusion he said that "by *Chambis* alone they could attain *Swamy*." He also announced that, during his recent trip to Jharia, he had been able to collect Rs. 60,000/- for the National University, mostly from Gujaratis, Bengalis and Marwaris. A Bengali Zamindar of Katras had donated Rs. 2,000/- for the purpose. He then proceeded by car to Dinapur, where he opened a National School and came to Patna City in the afternoon to open a National School there.

To ensure communal amity and peace during the approaching *Batr-Id* festival, Mahatma Gandhi undertook a tour in Bihar in the middle of August, 1921, accompanied by Maulana Muhammad Ali, Abdul Kadir Sobhani, Seth Jamuna Lal Bajaj and some others. The party visited Buxar, Dumraon, Koeth, Bikramganj, and Sasaram in the Shahabad district, Gaya and Sherghati in the Gaya district, and Bihar Sharif in the Patna district. At Buxar, an address printed on *Khadder* was presented to Mahatma Gandhi on behalf of the local Municipality by its Vice-Chairman, Shri Satya Narayan Lal. At Sherghati a purse of Rs. 875/- in a *Khadder* bag was given to Mahatma Gandhi by Babu Doman Lal, a local Zamindar. A large number of weavers attended the meeting at Bihar Sharif and were deeply influenced by Mahatma Gandhi's soul-stirring speech. An address of welcome and honour was presented to Mahatma Gandhi by the Bihar Sharif Municipality. Mahatma Gandhi and his companions stayed at Patna from the 14th to the 16th August.

Mahatma Gandhi was present in a meeting of the Congress Working Committee, held in the *Sadapal Ashram* at Patna on the 16th August, along with Pandit Moulal Nehru, Dr. Rajendra



Prasad, Maulana Muhammad Ali and Seth Jamuna Lal Bajaj). It passed several resolutions, the most important one being on the boycott of foreign cloth. When Mahatma Gandhi and his party had to halt in a Bihar village on account of rains, an old woman, moving in search of him, said, "Sir, I am now one hundred and four and my sight has grown dim. I have visited the various holy places. In my own home I have dedicated two temples. Just as we had Rama and Krishna as *astors*, so also Mahatma Gandhi has appeared as an *astor*, I hear. Until I have seen him, death would not appear."<sup>1</sup> This is a highly striking illustration of the growing faith of the common folk in the message of the Mahatma. Mahatma Gandhi left Patna for Assam by the Punjab Mail on the 16th August, 1921.

Mahatma Gandhi was arrested on the 10th March, 1922, and was released from the Yeravda jail, after a serious illness, early in 1924. The Non-Co-operation Movement made rapid progress in Bihar in the face of severe repression on the part of the Government. Mahatma Gandhi expressed his appreciation of it in some of his writings which appear in this volume.

The years 1924 to 1928 formed a critical period in the history of Indian nationalism, due chiefly to widening of party differences and to growing communal tension. But Mahatma Gandhi's personal influence helped the country immensely in these days of trial. Not unnerved in the least by the various disintegrating forces, he with his unshaken faith in the value of constructive works of different kinds for true national regeneration, preached their efficacy by undertaking tours from one part of the country to another. "I travel," said Mahatmaja, "because I fancy that the masses want to meet me. I certainly want to meet them. I deliver my simple message to them in a few words and they and I are satisfied. It penetrates the mass mind slowly and surely."<sup>2</sup>

Bihar, as during the previous years, proved loyal to the message of Mahatma Gandhi, who made extensive tours

1. Tendulkar, *Mahatma*, Vol. II, p. 78.

2. Mahadev Desai, *Gandhi in Indian Village*, p. 232.

here in 1925 and 1927. Detailed descriptions of these tours are available in the pages of *Young India* and in the work, entitled *Gandhi in Indian Villages*, by Shri Mahadev Desai. Referring to the 1927 Bihar trip of Mahatma Gandhi, Shri Mahadev Desai wrote from his personal experience: "Let the doubter and the sceptic go to Bihar and see that the Province, watered by the mighty rivers, Ganges and Sarayu, Gandak and Son, is watered no less by the mighty Ganges of faith which will never dry." These tours of Mahatma Gandhi in Bihar had a magical effect in awakening the masses.

Some interesting details are available about Mahatma Gandhi's tour in the Purnea district in 1925. Starting from Kishanganj, Mahatma Gandhi reached Araria at about 9 A.M. on the 12th October, 1925, and immediately went round the town in a motor car. It is stated in a Government Report that "though the crowd was immense it was silent and orderly." After taking a rest for a short while in the District Board Inspection Bungalow, Mahatma Gandhi went to the premises of the McIntosh Club, where arrangements had been made for a public meeting. At the request of the Chairman and the Secretary of the Reception Committee, Babu Tara Prasanna Das Gupta and Babu Tarakeshwar Ray respectively, he first addressed a Ladies' meeting in the hall of the Technical Institute, situated close to the McIntosh Club. "There was a big gathering of the ladies. Some of them were spinning on *Charkas* before Mahatmaji. Good collections were made on the spot." When the Ladies' meeting was over, Mahatma Gandhi visited the local *Ramkrishna Seva Ashram*. In his speech in reply to the Address presented to him at Araria, Mahatma Gandhi asked the people to take to *Charkas* and laid much stress on Hindu-Muslim unity, use of *Khash*, removal of untouchability and temperance. A collection was also made for the *All-India Desbandhu Fund*. After the meeting at Araria was over, Mahatma Gandhi left for Forbesganj by the afternoon train.

Mahatma Gandhi visited Vishnupur on the 13th October. Collections for *Desbandhu Fund* were made "in a mammoth meeting attended," as we know from a Government Report,

"by more than fifty thousand people. But to the credit of the workers the meeting was one of the most peaceful ones in this tour." In the evening, Mahatma Gandhi performed the opening ceremony of a Hindi Library called the *Matri Mandir* (established as a memorial to the deceased wife of Shri Chaudhary Lalchand) and also addressed a Ladies meeting. In the morning of the 14th October, Mahatma Gandhi returned to Purnea. A public meeting was held here in the afternoon, when six *Addresses* were presented to him on behalf of the public and some organisations. Kumar Ganganand Singh, then host of Mahatma Gandhi in Purnea, gave an *At Home* that evening in his honour.

During Mahatma Gandhi's Bihar tour in 1925, *Addresses* were presented to him by the public, the District Boards, the Municipalities and other organisations at many places. The Address presented to him on behalf of the Kishanganj Municipality was as follows:—

"To

Mahatma Mohan Das Karam Chand Gandhi,  
The Idol of the People of India.

Honoured Sir,

It is a source of genuine pleasure to us to have this opportunity of welcoming you in our midst in this little town of Kishanganj, which you have been pleased to visit by making great personal sacrifice and in spite of many calls upon your valuable time.

We the custodians of this self-governing little town have been greatly honoured by your presence and this occasion of your visit will ever be remembered as a unique event in the annals of this town. Your services in the cause of India and the Indian people have been varied and numerous and being connected with self-Government, we have always viewed with profound admiration the genuine attempts made by you, in collaboration with the Ali Brothers, to widen the domain of self-government and to broadcast it on the people's will. The sacrifices and sufferings, which you all gladly made and underwent, have rendered the cause sacred and sublime.

In order to attain this end, you have lost no moment to impress upon everybody, on all occasions, that friendliest feelings should prevail among the various communities of India. In this matter also, you have rendered signal services in conjunction with the said Ah Brothers. You have endeared yourself to the whole of India by your large-hearted sympathy with the masses of this ancient country, and by your anxious solicitude for the uplift of the depressed classes—a problem, the successful solution of which would add the strongest pillar to the fabric of self-government.

We are, however, glad to inform you that, in our dear little town, we have no problem of depressed classes to solve, nor has there been any disunion among the different communities inhabiting it. We have amongst us the full *sway* of co-operation, and responsive co-operation is the motto of our self-governing institution.

We devoutly hope that your pure and unalloyed faith in the destiny of the people and the country may burn like a flame and ever grow brighter to lighten the path of your fellow-countrymen, and that many years of fruitful public service in the cause of the country may yet be vouchsafed to you to lead and guide the people of India.

We have the honour to subscribe ourselves,

Your grateful fellow countrymen and Commissioners of the Kishanganj Municipality."

The Deoghar Municipality passed a resolution to the following effect: "In view of the fact that Mahatma Gandhi, the greatest apostle of love and the cult of non-violence, is expected to visit Deoghar towards the end of September, it is resolved that an *Address* of welcome be presented to him by this Municipality and the Chairman be requested to read the *Address* of welcome before him."

The Patna City Municipality presented an *Address* to Mahatma Gandhi on his arrival at Patna on the 23rd September, 1925 :

"MAHATMAN!

It is a matter of great fortune for us that you have taken trouble to visit this city of ours. We, on our own behalf and

on behalf of the inhabitants of this city, extend to you our most cordial welcome.

The services of various kinds, which you have rendered and are still rendering, are well known to the world. It is meaningless and unnecessary to repeat them. You have done a signal service to the world by showing the pleasant path of truth, peace and non-violence, even in thorny political spheres, for which the misery-stricken people will always remain indebted to you.

We are proud of the fact that this city was once the metropolis of Emperor Asoka from where he sent for the first time the most holy message of non-violence to far off countries. Though our past glory has vanished and we have fallen down much from the lofty ideals of that *Rajasth*, yet we feel pleasure in saying that this city has always been free from communal clashes, and Hindus and Muslims have always been living here like brothers. It is true that recently, like other places, here too some patches of dark clouds of discord and animosity have appeared in the firmament. We pray to God that this auspicious visit of the apostle of peace and non-violence in this present age may dispel our mutual momentary bickerings like vanishing trials of morning clouds and the feelings of age-old friendship and love may remain intact.

We are sorry to observe that in this Municipality there is neither any survival of the old municipal administration of the days of Chandragupta, nor is it provided with the amenities of a modern city available in the capital cities of the other Provinces. We are also sorry that we have not made any special efforts for the amelioration of the condition of the untouchables and the downtrodden, which is your cherished desire, though we are running two schools for the downtrodden. In other schools there is no restriction about the admission of the untouchables. Your Holiness, give us your blessings, so that, in spite of our limited finances, we may bring about proper improvement of the physical, mental and moral conditions of the inhabitants of this city.

We are very thankful to you for your having spared your invaluable time, despite your multifarious pressing

engagements, in visiting our Province and this city, and once again we extend our respectful and loving welcome to you."

It is significant to note that during 1927-28 there was anti-*pardah* movement in Bihar, which received much encouragement from Mahatma Gandhi, who always preached before the world the truest gospels of a pure social revolution. Shri Ramanand Mishra of Dambhanga had started a campaign against *pardah* and went to Mahatma Gandhi's Ashram at Sabarmati to seek his blessings for it. To facilitate the progress of this wholesome work, Mahatma Gandhi deputed to Bihar, Radhababen, daughter of Shri Maganlal Gandhi and Durgadevi, daughter of Shri Dalbahadur Giri. On coming to Bihar, Maganlalji fell ill, while on duty in the village where his daughter was working, and died at Patna on the 23rd April, 1928.<sup>1</sup> The death of this crusader for a noble cause gave much impetus to the anti-*pardah* movement in Bihar.

The people of Bihar were most zealously devoted to the ideals and preachings of Mahatma Gandhi and many other national leaders of India entertained feelings of deep attachment to this State. "A strange bond of attachment subsists," wrote Shri Mahadev Desai in 1929, "between Bihar and every non-Bihari worker who is attached to the programme laid down by Gandhiji. For me it has been always a pleasure and privilege to visit Bihar where I learnt the alphabets of public life and public service, but for any other worker Bihar holds no less fascination. The secret of this attachment is Bihar's devotion to the Master who first showed the way

1. "He whom I had singled out as heir to my all is no more. Maganlal Gandhi, a grandson of an uncle of mine, had been with me in my work since 1904. Maganlal's father had given all his boys to the cause. The deceased went early this month to Bengal with Seth Jaganlalji and others, contracted a fever while he was on duty in Bihar and died under the protective care of Bhai Kishore in Patna after an illness of nine days and after receiving all the devoted nursing that love and skill would give" Mahatma Gandhi in *Young India*, 26th April, 1928

to escape from the manifold shackles of centuries and Bihar's readiness to receive with open arms any one who represents the Master and who comes to preach or even to repeat his message." The leaders and the people of Bihar in turn enjoyed special affection of the great leader. On the death of one of its veteran patriots Shri Marharul Haque, in 1929, he sent a touching message of condolence.

With the inauguration of the *Salt Satyagraha* in 1930 and the *Civil Disobedience Movement* commenced a highly significant period in the history of Indian nationalism, and Bihar's role in this period was heroic. But a great calamity in the shape of a terrible earthquake fell on the Province on the 15th of January 1934, producing highly devastating effects in an area of 50,000 square miles. The horrors of this veritable scourge of Nature, and the woes and distress caused by it, beggar description.

Relief arrangements of various kinds were made by the *Bihar Central Relief Committee* which was soon reorganised as the *Central Relief Committee*, and functioned under the guidance of Dr. Rajendra Prasad. Other non-official agencies and Government agencies also did their best to repair the ravages of this gigantic cataclysm. But the problem of reconstructing and rehabilitating the devastated areas was, indeed baffling. Referring to it Dr. Rajendra Prasad observed: "It is vast and complicated enough to tax all the energy, enthusiasm and concentration we can command and to exhaust all the funds that the general instincts of our countrymen and foreigners can furnish."

The news of this dreadful catastrophe reached Mahatma Gandhi through the newspapers, and a telegram from Dr. Rajendra Prasad, dated 21st January, 1934. Mahatma Gandhi regarded the Earthquake as "a divine chastisement sent by God for our sins," particularly the "sin of untouchability". But he was very much moved at the desolation of "fair Bihar," and so postponing his *Haryan* tour he started for Patna on the 9th March, 1934. Reaching Patna on the 11th March, 1934, he halted in the office of the *Central Relief Committee* before starting for Motihari with Dr. Rajendra Prasad, Mks. Shale, Miss Muriel Lester and Miss Hogg in

his company on the 14th March. On the way he visited Hajipur and Lalganj. Large numbers of the rural people had assembled all along the way before he reached Motihari after nightfall, and he addressed them all. Next morning Mahatma Gandhi and his party visited the countryside. Coming back to Motihari, Mahatma Gandhi met in a conference that afternoon the representatives of the different relief organisations, including some officers of the Government. He impressed upon the Congress relief-workers the need of wholehearted co-operation with others to combat the evils of the dreadful calamity, and also gave consolatory advice to the people of Motihari. Mahatma Gandhi reached Muzaffarpur at about 9 A.M. on the 16th March, accompanied by Miss Mariel Lester, her niece Miss Hogg, Mira Behn, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, Shri Krishna Ballabh Sahay and Shri Bageswari Prasad, Assistant Editor of the *Searchlight*. The three cars carrying them moved round the town, where the ruined houses were pointed out to them by Shri Mahesh Prasad Sinha. The party was entertained at the residence of Shri Mahesh Prasad Sinha, which they left at about 12.25 P.M. to attend a meeting, arranged in the compound of the *Makaraj's Kuthi* in *mohalla Jaran Chakra*. Mahatma Gandhi spoke about relief work and untouchability.

Mahatma Gandhi returned to Patna by 5.30 P.M. and held a prayer meeting at the *Baskin's Masjid*. On the 18th March, Mahatma Gandhi presided over a meeting of the *Bihar Central Relief Committee*, held at the *State Institute Hall* at Patna. After a highly appealing speech by Dr. Rajendra Prasad, a new executive was formed and some important resolutions were passed. The 19th March was a day of silence. On the 20th March, Mahatma Gandhi addressed a large gathering at a meeting held at the *Mangals Tank*, Patna City. This meeting was addressed also by Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad. On the 21st March, Mahatma Gandhi held a meeting at Patna of the representatives of different relief organisations working in Bihar. On a request from the *Bihar Central Relief Committee*, the Government deputed a Deputy Magistrate,



10 FEB 1969

6907



MEETINGS AND SPEECHES

named Shri Atul Chandra Sen, to attend this meeting and to explain there the measures adopted by the Government for relief in the Patna District. The representatives of relief organisations, present at the meeting, read out their reports. On the 24th March, Mahatma Gandhi addressed a large meeting at Dinapur. An *Address* on behalf of the Dinapur citizens was presented to him on this occasion and he collected there on the spot Rs. 252 for Earthquake relief and *Harijan Food*.

Mahatma Gandhi, with his party consisting of Dr. Rajendra Prasad, Shri Mathura Prasad, Mira Behn, Miss Kishun Behn, daughter of Seth Jankana Lal Bajaj, Shri Bulji (Mahatma's steno), Dr. Rajendra Prasad's sister and two Maratha ladies, left Patna in the morning of the 27th March and reached Sonpur at about 9 A.M. At the request of the people assembled there, Mahatma Gandhi made a speech. The party proceeded in cars by Candak Road. On its arrival at Saraya, Mahatma Gandhi spoke to the crowd, which had gathered there, the same thing as he had spoken at Sonpur. The party then proceeded to Paraurampur, where a pandal had been erected to receive Mahatma Gandhi, who spoke there also for a few minutes to the same effect as at Sonpur. From this place the party went to Panapur at about 12 noon, where all took rest for three hours before Mahatma Gandhi addressed a meeting from a pandal which had been arranged for this purpose. Babu Mahendra Prasad, brother of Dr. Rajendra Prasad, Shri Prabhunath Singh, Vice Chairman, Saran District Board, Shri Ramdeo Singh, Vakil, Shri Gerakhuath Tewary, Dr. Tarni Prasad, B.A.S. (Masrak), Dr. S. Noor of Ghapra and some others had already reached Panapur to make arrangements for the entertainment of Mahatma Gandhi's party.

Leaving Panapur by car, the party reached Ghapra after 5 P.M. Staying at the house of Dr. Mahmud for some time, Mahatma Gandhi proceeded at 6.30 P.M. to address a meeting, which had been arranged in the compound of the local Rajput school. In the morning of the 28th March,

1. Miss Agatha Harrison came to Patna on the 25th March, 1934.

Mahatma Gandhi and his party moved round the Chapra town in cars, later met the District Magistrate and was also present at a meeting of the relief workers.

Mahatma Gandhi left Chapra for Muzaffarpur by the mid-day train on the 28th March, and was greeted by large crowds at the intervening stations. He addressed the people, who had assembled in large numbers at the Hajipur and Sonapur Railway stations, on untouchability and relief work. Many presented to him silver and copper coins for humanitarian work. Reaching Muzaffarpur at about 7 P.M. Mahatma Gandhi went by car straight to *Jurax Chapra*, where a meeting had been arranged. Besides collecting funds here he delivered a speech emphasising the efficacy of prayer as a means for the purification of the soul and on the need for the removal of untouchability. When the meeting was over, Mahatma Gandhi and his party went to *Baulghat Ashram*, where accommodation had been arranged for the night.

At about 7.30 A.M. on the 29th March, Mahatma Gandhi and his party left for Sitamarhi by car and at about 8.30 A.M. reached Bedaul, a village on the Sitamarhi road, where the *Bihar Central Relief Committee* had established a centre. He was greeted there by a large number of people and then proceeded by boat to visit Barthua Ghar, a flood-affected area in Katra police station. After a short speech, Mahatma left for Beland with his party. On reaching there at about 10.30 A.M. they took rest in the huts of the *Central Relief Committee* there till about 3 P.M. and then moved on to Chandauli at a distance of about one mile, where, as is stated in a Government report, "an enormous crowd" had gathered to hear Mahatma Gandhi's speech. He asked them to remove untouchability and to work instead of depending fully on others. Mahatma Gandhi and his party then proceeded to Sitamarhi, which had been utterly devastated by the earthquake and where many volunteers from the *Gandhi Ashram* were then administering relief to the afflicted people. Here in a speech he stressed the fundamental equality of all faiths. Mahatma Gandhi and his party left Sitamarhi

for Kamtaul at about 7.30 A.M. on the 30th March. On the way he stopped at Sursand and Pupri and delivered short speeches before the people assembled there, asking them to remove untouchability and "not to sit idle but to work and dig their own wells and excavate new ones." At one of these places in the Muzaffarpur District, Shri Ram Briksh Benipuri presented an *Address* to Mahatma Gandhi.

On the 30th March, Mahatma Gandhi and his party left Sitamarhi and reached Darbhanga, where a large crowd were awaiting him at the football ground. He was escorted there by the Maharaj Kumar of Darbhanga (brother of the *Maharajadhiraj*) and the European Manager of the estate. In his speech there Mahatma Gandhi made a fervent appeal to the people to eradicate untouchability as a means for true social reform and self-purification, by drawing their attention to what he felt to be Nature's warning against man's sins. Starting from Darbhanga in the morning of the 31st March, Mahatmaji reached Madhubani at noon, and paid a flying visit to Rajnagar, where the sight of the ruins of the magnificent buildings as a result of the earthquake pained him much.

After this Mahatmaji entered the Bhagalpur District at Nirmali on the 1st April and toured in the District covering 110 miles by car in one day. He halted at Sahausa on his silence day and addressed a few words to about one lakh people in the evening. From Bihpur, Mahatma Gandhi went to Bhagalpur. Mahatma Gandhi got down from the train at the Bihpur Railway Station at about 3.30 A.M. But even in that early hour he spoke before a vast crowd, which had assembled there, and then left for Bhagalpur on a special steamer which had been provided by Sri Deep Narayan Singh. He stayed at Bhagalpur with Shri Deep Narayan Singh and addressed a large meeting at the Lajpat Park before leaving for Monghyr. On the 3rd April, Mahatma Gandhi reached Monghyr at about 11 A.M. Here the earthquake had wrought havoc by taking a heavy toll of human lives (about ten thousand) and ruining about two thousand houses.

On their arrival at Monghyr, Mahatma Gandhi and his party were received by Dr. Shrikrishna Sinha, Shri Nirupada Mukherjee, President of the local branch of the *Bihar Central Relief Committee*, Mr. Rizvi, Vice-Chairman of the Monghyr District Board, Shri Rajniti Prasad Singh, Shri Shukrishna Sahay and some others. They were accommodated in the guest house of the B.C.R.C. in the District Board office. In the afternoon members of the *Monghyr Reconstruction Committee*, headed by Shri Rajniti Prasad Singh, had an interview with Mahatma Gandhi. Due to the influence of Mahatma Gandhi's magnetic personality, the people here behaved with perfect discipline. "In controlling the crowd," states a Government Report, dated the 4th April, 1934, "the police were hardly required. The volunteers seemed to do everything as a result of which the police kept in the background." From 4 P.M. Mahatma Gandhi toured round the town for about an hour and a half after which he addressed a meeting from a pandal erected near the Railway Station. Late in the evening some of the *Harjias* workers interviewed him. Many ladies attended this meeting. After leaving Monghyr, and coming to Patna District, the *Savatanists* showed Mahatma Gandhi the black flag at Burhen. He advised the *Savatanists* to cultivate toleration and respect for other's beliefs by drawing their attention to the famous saying of *Talsidas*: "kindness is the foundation of all religions, pride the parent of all sins." In the early morning of the 4th April, Mahatma Gandhi paid a brief visit to Jamalpur and then went to Mokameh, Purnah, Barh and Bakhtiarpur and spoke at these places on earthquake relief. Mahatma Gandhi reached Patna in the evening of the 4th April.

According to a Press report, during his tour in the earthquake affected areas from the 27th March to the 4th April, 1934, Mahatma Gandhi collected Rs. 6,833-9-1 out of which Rs. 2,833-4-1 was allotted for relief work and the rest for *Harjia* uplift. In the task of healing the ravages of the earthquake, Mahatma Gandhi advised co-operation from all quarters. Presiding over a meeting of the *Central Relief Committee*, he moved the following resolution from the chair:

"This Committee tenders its most respectful co-operation to the Government in prosecution of the common object of relieving the unparalleled distress that has overtaken Bihar."

Accompanied by Dr. Rajendra Prasad and some others, Mahatma Gandhi reached Katihar on the 8th April. From there he went to Forbesganj, where he addressed a meeting of many thousand people. An *Address* was presented to him there in a casket, which was auctioned then and there for Rs. 31/-, and the amount was earmarked for *Bharya Fund*. Besides this, about Rs. 500 more was collected there. After visiting a village called Fulkana, late in the evening he went to Araria, where he stayed with Babu Tara Prasanna Das Gupta, a local pleader. On the 9th April, he reached Purnea, where he stayed with Babu Gokul Krishna Rai, a veteran Congress worker of the place. Vast crowds of people flocked to his presence everywhere to derive solace from his messages in that period of dire calamity.

At a public meeting at Purnea the following *Address* was presented to Mahatma Gandhi on the 9th April by Raja P.C. Lal on behalf of the local Municipality:

"To

Mahatma Mohan Das Karam Chand Gandhi:

May it please Mahatma,

Years back the people of this town and District had the proud privilege of welcoming Mahatma. Since then time has made huge strides and an important chapter in the History of the Indian Nation has been enacted. In our calamity the Mahatma has not forgotten us. We on behalf of the residents of the Town crave leave to accord our heartiest and respectful welcome to Mahatma, the greatest of our living men, and to Sreejuktia Rajendra Prasad, the great man of Bihar, and to the ladies, the associates of Mahatma in the cause of suffering humanity.

The people of this town and of the District have also felt the devastating effects of the Earthquake.

We are at the tail end of the Province and we are told that we are at the tail end of the devastation. No doubt

our cries were not loud enough to be heard and we had no champion to voice our distress. For some days after the disaster we were practically cut off from outside world and the world knew not whether Parner escaped unscathed or suffered like other places. No doubt the town cannot boast of so much masonry like other towns that have suffered but the loss in comparison is not the less. The buildings are mostly standing and from outside there is very little to attract attention but they are uninhabitable or unsafe. The people are not in need of gratuitous relief excepting a few but the problem facing us is repairs, reconstruction and adequate water supply.

Our needs are moderate though our means very slender but nonetheless pressing and urgent. The people of the backward District are silently awaiting developments. The rains are not far off from us and we are in need of monetary help and building materials at cheapest possible rates.

The District is entirely agricultural and the lands not very fertile. The continued slump and bad crops have made even the condition of the more rich and flourishing embarrassing in the extreme. It is difficult, if not impossible, to find money within the District. We are still silently awaiting relief hoping that we will have a fair share in the consideration of the Government and the world. We had been looking forward with hope to the announcement of the Government about the terms of the loan and now that the terms have been published the people are looking askance at the rates of interest. It is our submission therefore that the Central Relief Committee comes to our help in trying for the relaxation of the terms.

Another great problem facing us is the question of water supply. Wells that would be cleaned have been cleared of sand but many have been damaged beyond hope of repairs. Public and private wells have suffered alike. It is feared that most of them that are now used would dry up during the summer months as they are all very shallow and are being again filled with sand. The means at the disposal of the Municipality is slender and the area under it extensive

and with funds at its disposal it can hardly hope to cope with the situation like this.

We hear Purnea has gone down few feet and the water level has come up resulting in loss of many feet. We have no authentic information to corroborate or contradict. River beds and water channels have been raised up. The rivers in the affected areas, Koshi and Kankai, are notorious for their vagaries and our soil is only sand or sandy. We do not know if any or what precautions are necessary. To the misery of a makeshift living have been added the anxiety for the future. We hope the *Central Relief Committee* will take steps to allay our anxiety or confirm our doubts enabling us to take necessary precautions. This town has extensive protective embankments, solely maintained by the Municipality. These embankments have badly cracked with gaping fissures which is daily widening. The lands on both sides of the embankments have also badly cracked. The Municipality has not the means at its disposal to take up this expensive work to save the town from the ravages of flood.

There is largely the question of drainage. So long as the Civil Station was being drained by what is known as Lalgarh Drain which by the ravages of the Earthquake has been filled up by the sand, the level badly disturbed and in places the bed of the Drain has been raised feet above the side levels. Purnea is notorious for its malaria and to save the people from floods and diseases it is urgent that we get the expert advice and money for the proper drainage without which the Municipality is helpless to do anything.

In conclusion we crave leave to express our gratitude and thanks to Mahatma and Sreejutta Rajendra Prasad and to the ladies and to the gentlemen from far off places for being in our midst at a time like this. The presence of the great has infused in us a new life and inspired us with hope and confidence and we feel that though our needs are few and demands modest we have not been altogether forgotten and neglected and that we will get a fair chance of consideration along with other sufferers."

The Address was auctioned and was first purchased by Raja P.C. Lal for Rs. 125. He again presented it to Mahatma Gandhi, who re-auctioned it to the wife of Babu Beer Narayan Chaudh, a local landholder of considerable influence, for Rs. 250. Of the entire amount collected in the Purnea District, half was given to the *Relief Fund* and half to the *Harijan Fund*.

From the people of Purnea in general Mahatma Gandhi received a homage in the following heartfelt Address:—

—कन्देवालाजी—

भारतवर्ष के सर्वश्रेष्ठ नेता, महिला और बाल के अखिलीय पुनारी,  
वैद्यभुक्त गुरुदत्ता पाखी की सेवा में सादर समर्पित

हृदय समर्पण.

आज जहाँ इस तरह में आप समस्त व्यापकता सर्वश्रेष्ठ नेता का सर्वश्रेष्ठ सेवा कर हम पुनर्निर्माण विचारों के अर्थों की परम सीमाप्राप्ति समझते हैं। पुनर्निर्माण विचारों की ओर से आप हमें आप जैसे देश के बाल, महिला के आधार, जनसंख्या उपजाती सेवा का सादर अभिनन्दन करते हैं।

हमारा पुनर्निर्माण विचार एक ही चीज और अन्तर्गत का आधार समझा जाता है, हमारे प्रकृति के एक अन्तर्गत अन्तर्गत करने के हमारी प्रकृति की अतिशय कर दिया है। हमारे सभी आकाशों के अन्तर्गत से तथा सीमाओं और पक्षों के पक्षों की अधिकता नहीं होने के कारण सभी पक्षों की समस्त विशेष नहीं है, किन्तु हम और सम्पत्ति का विचार नहीं करना है। पुनर्निर्माण विचार के प्रकृति में, अन्तर्गत, अन्तर्गत, तथा पुनर्निर्माण की विशेषता नहीं है, हम इनमें से सबसे अधिक प्रति पुनर्निर्माण की हुई है। पुनर्निर्माण सादर में समस्त ही कोई एक ही पक्षों का पक्षों होना, जिसे कोई प्रति नहीं पक्षों है, और इनमें से अधिकता ही ऐसे ही पक्षों कि उनमें प्रकृति का सीमा में अन्तर्गत है। प्रकृति के पक्षों सभी कुछ पक्षों के कारण कुछ जिसे एक पक्षों के जिसे पक्षों की सर्व अन्तर्गत का समझा करना पड़ा था। सीमाओं कि एक पक्षों का अन्तर्गत पक्ष ही पक्ष था, अन्तर्गत पर एक नहीं जाती थी, तथा पक्षों एक पक्षों का पक्षों एक पक्षों था। पक्षों और पक्षों एक पक्षों के कारण प्रकृति की ही पक्षों ही था, प्रकृति के विचार विचार प्रकृति में अन्तर्गत ही पक्षों प्रकृति ही पक्षों था। जिसे के विचार २ पक्षों से ही समझा



प्राप्त हुए हैं, उसके पता चलता है कि देशांतरी की अवस्था भी कम बीजनीय नहीं है। वहाँ के पहले कथनें दूर नहीं, हुए और कथनें मूल बने, नवनें और नुने सराब हो गयीं, दुमि उस गली तथा पानी और बाबू का मोटा गिकल आया। दूसरे अदुसकाल करनेवालों की धारणा है कि पुनिष ५ कीर नीले चल गया है तथा नदीमल और पुन्नी-तल का अवकाश कुछ इस प्रकार बरत गया है कि कोची एवं अन्य गरियों के बाह के इस गहुर और बिले की बल-बलवित ही खने की आरका है। नवनिबलितानों को सबसे अधिक दुमि पहुँची है।

गहुराबू, बिहार के बलि आग के उबार हुएम में जो विगत प्रेम है, वह आपके नर्माल समम से बलवत है। हम बिहार निवासी इसके लिए बाह के वरत खोजी रहें कि आपने अपने गारे कार्यक्रम की स्थापित कर, अपने समाज की नर्माल होने अवस्था की परगाह न कर, दुली बिहार की कम पुकार की सुनी तथा हमारे कपों के कटार के बिलित गहुरी परागि करने की कृपा की। आपके पुनममम से हमारे पुनमम नीमल से नवीन आया का गवार हुआ है। हमें उम्मीद है कि आपके तथा बिहारगल बाबू रावेग बरार के विरीमल द्वारा पुनिरी बाली की दुसकाल अवकाश बल ही बनेगी तथा उनके कल विचारम का उचित अवकाश होगा। अतः इस बिले में नवीनों के बाबू हमारे का प्रान बहुत विर्रित नहीं है, लवलि नकूची और बनेगिरी के बिले बलवतनी की गल करला, लीनी की गुलर बाह में समम बलने की नकूची का बलवत कर देला, तथा गरीची के बिले अधिक गहुरका देला बादि कार्य वहाँ के बिले बलवत आरका है। तथा ही अन्ता ही बरर बिहार केरीय पीपील कपीटी अन्ती एक बल-नील गलत इस बिले में स्थापित कर लीनी के कपी की हमारे की भरगुर केरु करे। हमारा विनमल है कि हमारी बलवतकलानी पर बाह बने उबार तथा गहुरा देला अवकाश बलवत देवी। इस दूत एलवार आका हुएम के नवनिबल करी हैं तथा नर्माला के बलवत करी हैं कि के आतनी पीपील करे ताकि देखले गलनी नकूम देला का बहुत नवी तक लीमाम प्राप्त हो नके।

हम हैं,

आपके कलकली,  
पुनिषा बिला विवालीमल।  
१-४-१४।

On the morning of the 10th April, Mahatma Gandhi went to Tikapatti, where he addressed a large number of people for a few minutes. Then he boarded the train for Assam at the Kauragola Station at 8.30 A.M. on that date.

After touring in Assam for two weeks, Mahatma Gandhi came back to Patna on the 24th April, 1934, and recommenced his *Harjan* uplift tour. On the 25th April, 1934, Mahatma Gandhi reached the Kulharia station by train, and then went by motor car to Jamua at the invitation of Babu Radha Mohan Singh, M.L.C. From there he proceeded by motor car to Arrah and addressed there a public meeting of about ten thousand persons at the *Ramen Mandar*. An opening song, specially composed for that occasion, was sung by some *Harjan* boys, who also garlanded him. On behalf of the local Municipal Commissioners, Chaudhury Sarafat Husain, M.L.C., presented to him an *Adhvan*, written on *Akash* handkerchiefs in Hindi and Urdu, which reads in English as follows:—

"Respected Mahatma Gandhiji,

It is the day of greatest pleasure today that the people of this town have got the opportunity of welcoming you in their midst. The people are overwhelmed with joy by seeing you today. We are unable to find words to express our pleasure. We pray to the Almighty Father to grant you longevity so that people of this place may have the opportunity of seeing you occasionally.

It is your real love and cult of non-violence that has spread new light in the whole world. It is hoped that your principle will produce good results on the entire population, mutual differences of opinion will disappear, and the foundation of goodwill and affection will be strong. You will be pleased to learn in this connection that our town is free from Hindu-Muslim tension which, unfortunately, is found in other towns of this country.

You will be pleased to learn that the members of the *Chamar* community of this town are more enlightened and educated than their fellow brethren elsewhere.

Of the *Harjan* *Pathshala* in this town, we give grants-in-aid to two institutions.

We regret to bring to your notice that our town has not escaped the devastation that has been wrought by the last Earthquake in this Province. Many houses have collapsed

and deaths also have occurred. There is not a single house in this town which has not been affected by the calamity.

You have been touring for the uplift of the depressed classes. It is worthy of you indeed. You have come here in this connection for which we are really overjoyed.

Again, we cordially welcome you in our midst and pray to God to grant to you long life."

Raja Radhika Raman Prasad Sinha, Chairman of the *Shahadad District Anti-Unsatckability League*, Babu Bhagat Prasad and Babu Satrunjay Prasad Singh presented to Mahatma Gandhi purses worth Rs. 500, Rs. 487-2-0 and Rs. 51 respectively. Some others, including a few local merchants, also presented purses to him, while he halted for a while at the residence of Shri Banstropan Ram Chaudhury. Leaving Arrah by train at 11 o'clock, Mahatma Gandhi reached Buxar by midday and spent a few hours at the house of Babu Jagdev Rai, a local pleader and Municipal Commissioner, before addressing a meeting there at 4 P.M. Here also some persons presented purses to him. Both at Arrah and Buxar, the *Savakants* made demonstrations by showing black flags and tried to put some obstructions before Mahatma Gandhi. All these were of no avail before his unshakable faith, and he walked on foot, with some in his company, to the place of the meeting at Buxar and delivered a highly appealing speech.

Leaving Buxar by the evening train on the 25th April, Mahatma Gandhi reached Jasidih, where also the *Savakants* put obstructions and made demonstrations; the rear glass pane of the car<sup>1</sup> in which he was riding being broken by them. Getting down from the car, he walked for about a mile through the *Savakants*. There were demonstrations against him at Droghda also. He spoke to the demonstrators by appealing to their hearts and conscience.

After passing through some places in South Bihar, Mahatma Gandhi reached Ranchi on the 29th April and remained busy in the midst of strenuous activities. On the 3rd May

1. The car was lent by Babu Jagadish Prasad Singh, Chakral of Bahamangawan.

he opened the *Hargis Industrial School* at Ranchi and laid the foundation stone of the *Nagarn Ashram*, named after the selfless patriot Shri Nivaran Chandra Das Gupta of Purulia.

Mahatma Gandhi started for Orissa tour on the 4th May. On the 16th May he left Cuttack for Panna. After attending here a meeting of the *All India Congress Committee* on the 18th and 19th May, he started back for Orissa on the 20th May for his *Hargis* uplift tour there.

The year 1934 is significant in the history of Bihar not only for Mahatma Gandhi's tours here for humanitarian work, but also for the fact that at Panna the Congress leaders then effected a reorientation of Congress policy and fixed their future line of action.

In a conference, held at the residence of Dr. Ansari at Delhi on the 1st and 2nd April, 1934, the Congress leaders had arrived at the tentative decisions to revive the *All India Swarajya Party* and to contest the forthcoming elections according to the new constitution then under consideration of the British Parliament. On the 4th April, Dr. Ansari, Shri Bhulabhai Desai, and Dr. Bidhan Chandra Roy met Mahatma Gandhi at Panna to secure his approval for their decisions. On the 5th April, Mahatma Gandhi wrote as follows to Dr. Ansari:—"It was good of you, Bhulabhai and Dr. Bidhan to come all the way to Panna to discuss the resolutions arrived at recently at an informal meeting of some Congressmen and ascertain my opinion on them. I have no hesitation in welcoming the revival of the *Swarajya Party* and the decision of the meeting to take part in the forthcoming elections to the Assembly which you tell me is about to be dissolved.

My views on the utility of the Legislatures in the present state are well known. They remain, on the whole, what they were in 1920. But I feel that it is not only the right but it is the duty of every Congressman who, for some reason or other, does not want to or cannot take part in the civil resistance and who has faith in entry into the legislatures to seek entry and form combinations in order to prosecute the programme which he or they believe to be in

the interest of the country. Consistently with my view above-mentioned, I shall be at the disposal of the party at all times and render such assistance as it is in my power to give."

As regards the suspension of the Civil Disobedience Movement, Mahatma Gandhi expressed his views in a statement drafted by him at Saharna on the 2nd April and issued by him from Patna on the 7th April, 1934. On the 2nd and 3rd May, Mahatma Gandhi discussed this statement threadbare with the Congress leaders at Ranchi. Meeting at Patna in the *Radhika Shiksha Institute* on the 18th and 19th May, the *All India Congress Committee*, after consideration of the above mentioned statement of Mahatma Gandhi, accepted his recommendation for the suspension of Civil Disobedience. The resolution for Council entry was moved by Mahatma Gandhi himself. Certain amendments were moved and a group led by Acharya Narendra Dev and Shri Jayprakash Narayan strongly opposed it. But all the amendments were defeated after Mahatma Gandhi's reply and the resolution was ultimately accepted to the following effect:—"Inasmuch as there exists in the Congress a large body of members who believe in the necessity of entry into the Legislatures as a step in the country's progress towards its goal, the *All India Congress Committee* hereby appoints Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya and Dr. M. A. Ansari to form a Board with Dr. M.A. Ansari as President, called the Congress Parliamentary Board consisting of not more than twenty-five Congressmen.

The Board shall run and control elections of members to the Legislatures on behalf of the Congress and shall have power to raise, possess and administer funds for carrying out its duties.

The Board shall be subject to the control of the *All India Congress Committee* and shall have power to frame its constitution and make rules and regulations from time to time for the management of its affairs. The constitution and the rules and regulations shall be placed before the Working Committee for approval but shall be in force pending approval or otherwise of the Working Committee.

The Board shall select only such Congressmen as candidates who will be pledged to carry out in the Legislatures the Congress policy as it will be determined from time to time."

On the 3rd May, 1939, Mahatma Gandhi again came to Bihar from Calcutta, and inaugurated the fifth session of the *All India Gandhi Seva Sangh* at Brundaban in the Champaran District. Dr. Rajendra Prasad, then President of the Indian National Congress, unfurled the *Nehruv Flag* on that occasion. He observed there that many persons in the Congress fold did not observe the principle of non-violence and emphasised the need for universal observance of truth and non-violence.<sup>1</sup> Mahatma Gandhi addressed the *Sangh* in highly inspiring language. This was followed by some questions and Gandhi's replies to these, before this session of the *Sangh* came to a close on the 10th May. The following resolution was passed: "The object of the *Gandhi Seva Sangh* is to serve the people through constructive activities in accordance with Gandhi's principles. As for the fulfilment of that object, it is necessary to participate in political activities also; the *Sangh* has always permitted its members to take part in politics. But in as much as, even political activities must be conducted on the foundation of truth and non-violence, the attention of the members of the *Sangh* is emphatically drawn to the following self-evident rules of conduct, namely, that the members must follow Gandhiji's policy and teachings; that they must not only personally observe truth and non-violence very scrupulously but should also refrain from taking any advantage of the acts of their colleagues if they are inconsistent therewith and should, to the best of their ability, endeavour to make them observe the same principles."

After seven-day session (from 20th February, 1940) of the *Gandhi Seva Sangh* held at Malikanda, a village on the bank of the Padma River in East Bengal, was over, Mahatma Gandhi came to Faena to attend here the meeting of the *Working Committee*, held from the 28th February to the 1st March. The *Working Committee* recommended the Reso-

1. *The Indian Annual Register, 1939, Part I, p. 30.*

lution on '*India and the War Crisis*' for consideration at the forthcoming 53rd annual session of the Congress. This session met at Ramgarh in Chotanagpur in March, 1940, under the Presidentship of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad. On the 14th March, Mahatma Gandhi opened the *Khadi and Village Industries Exhibition* at Ramgarh and delivered inspiring speeches in Hindustani at the *Subjects Committee* and at the general meeting of the *Indian National Congress* (19th March and 20th March, 1940), after the Resolution on '*India and the War Crisis*' had been accepted. The Ramgarh session of the *Indian National Congress* gave a clarion call to the country to be ready for the inevitable and impending struggle under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi, who impressed upon the people the significance of the constructive programme and its relation to the non-violent struggle. As a moral protest against Britain's policy regarding India, Mahatma Gandhi advised individual civil disobedience. Bihar's response to the *Individual Civil Disobedience Movement* of 1940-41 was as enthusiastic as it had been during the earlier phases of the national movement.

The logic of events led to the outbreak of the great Revolution of 1942-43, in which Bihar's role was most heroic. Vast numbers of her people offered undoubtedly a valiant resistance to the forces of alien authority with a strong determination to uproot it. The Revolution was suppressed by force. But India's march towards freedom could not be arrested and on the 15th of August, 1947, she reached her destined goal.

Unfortunately, however, various factors had, in the meanwhile, aggravated communal separatism and bitterness, which plunged the country into an orgy of madness in 1946, producing most shocking consequences. India had to pay a very heavy price for it, by an artificial amputation of her national limbs, resulting in the painful partition of this vast land, the unity of which had been dreamt of by her poets and thinkers from the days of remote antiquity and had been acknowledged by others in modern times. The ideal of undivided India was shattered under the inexorable pressure of some unhappy circumstances.

In the period of agonies caused by Hindu-Muslim communal riots, following the *Calcutta Direct Action* of August, 1946, Mahatma Gandhi moved from place to place as an apostle of peace to soothe afflicted hearts and to repair the damage that man's atrocities and folly had caused to the ideal of an undivided India. Prof. George Cotlin, who was in Calcutta in March, 1947, declared in an exclusive interview with *Globe's* staff correspondent on the 13th March: "Mr. Gandhi is an apostle of the world.....What Mr. Gandhi is doing today on the soil of Bihar does not only concern the Indian problem; it is part of the world problem. He must succeed there.....The path he has indicated is the only path to world peace. We have seen the routes indicated by other great leaders of the world; we have seen the revolt of the labouring masses against unestrained capitalism; we have seen the rise and fall of Hitler's fascism, yet we have not found out any route for a man of goodwill. Mr. Gandhi's creed of non-violence is the only way to root out this hell of aggression that we are witnessing in the world today."

The East Bengal massacres and tortures of other kinds on the Hindus had violent repercussions in Bihar in the shape of widespread communal disturbances from October, 1946, in this Province in which the Muslims suffered great casualties. The immediate arrival of Dr. Rajendra Prasad, Shri Nehru and some others to the affected parts checked communal riots. On the 5th November, 1946, Dr. Rajendra Prasad announced in a Press Conference at Patna that Mahatma Gandhi had resolved to fast unto death if the communal riots in Bihar did not stop within twenty-four hours. On the morning of the 6th November, Mahatma Gandhi issued a statement, addressed "To Bihar." The situation was soon brought under control. After several days' stay in Bihar, Shri Nehru stated on the floor of the Central Legislative Assembly on the 14th November: "The Bihar situation was brought completely under control within a week.....This rapid ending of widespread movement which was on the verge of spreading to other districts was re-



markable. The military of course came.....But a much more powerful factor in this restoration of order was the effort of a large number of persons, chiefly Biharies, who spread all over the villages and came face to face with the natives. The news of Mahatma Gandhi's proposed fast also had a powerful effect."

The Government here also did its best to suppress the disturbances, though the Muslim League sought to make capital out of these and tried its best to discredit the Government by sending even distorted news<sup>1</sup> to Mahatma Gandhi through "angry letters, threatening letters, sometimes even abusive letters." Without being influenced by anger because of these, Mahatma Gandhi wanted to ascertain the truth. On the 6th February, Mahatma Gandhi wrote to Shri Nehru: "Very great pressure is being put upon me to go to Bihar because they all say that things are not properly represented to me on behalf of the Bihar Government. I am watching."<sup>2</sup>

On the 28th February, 1947, Shri Mujtaha, Secretary to Dr. Syed Mahmud, a Minister of Bihar, arrived before Mahatma Gandhi with a long letter. On receipt of it Mahatma Gandhi decided to start immediately for Bihar. For this he boarded a steamer at Chandpur on the 2nd March. "My journey to Bihar is a part of my great experiment that I am going through today," said Mahatma Gandhi addressing a mammoth gathering of Hindus and Muslims on the bank of the river Daksatia on the 2nd March. In the party which accompanied Mahatma Gandhi from Haimchar in Tipperah to Patna were Professor Nirmal Kumar Bose, then his personal Secretary, Miss Manu Gandhi, Shrimati Mridula Sarabhai, Syed Ahmad Husein, Shri Dev Prakash (brother of Shri Pyarelal), and Syed Mujtaha, Secretary to Dr. Mahmud.

To prevent rush of people, secrecy had been observed to detain Mahatma Gandhi at the Fatwah station, eighteen miles from Patna. But the newspaper reporters and camera-

1. Pyarelal, *Mahatma Gandhi, The Last Phase*, Vol. I, pp. 609-611

2. *Ibid.*

men somehow came to know of it and gathered there. "Even God Almighty cannot elude the Pressmen," said Mahatmaji. At Patna, Mahatma Gandhi was received by Prof. Abdul Bari and Shri Baidyanath Chaudhury, President and Secretary of the *Bihar Provincial Congress Committee* respectively and by the Chief Minister and five other members of the Bihar Cabinet. Mahatma Gandhi reached Patna early in the morning of the 5th March, after an interval of about seven years, and stayed in the quarters of Dr. Syed Mahmud. Mahatma Gandhi called on Mr. Abdul Aziz, former President of the *Bihar Provincial Muslim League* and Mr. S. M. Ismail, leader of the Opposition and Muslim League Party in the Bihar Assembly, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, Dr. S. K. Sinha, the Chief Minister of Bihar, and the other members of the Bihar Ministry, the members of the *Provincial Congress Committee*, Bihar, the Vice-Chancellor of the Patna University, Sir C. P. N. Singh, Shri Jayprakash Narayan, the leaders of the Muslim League, many other local influential Muslims, a batch of Frontier Red Shirts engaged in relief here, a large number of Muslim sufferers, and some others met Gandhiji from the first day of his arrival at Patna. He made all possible enquiries from different sources and had discussions with many.

All this was not enough. Declarations of statesmen, or administrative measures adopted with the best of intentions, do not always solve social maladies. A true appeal to hearts supplies the most efficacious remedy for assuaging wounded feelings. This was the key-note of Mahatma Gandhi's mission of peace in Bihar at this critical time. In the Prayer meetings, addressed by him at several places in Bihar, the inner voice of his soul spoke out messages of concord and harmony. With deep regret and grief for the communal riots in Bihar, he asked the Hindus to have genuine repentance to prove the truth of the saying: "The greater the sinner, the greater the saint."

On the 5th March, after the Prayer at the Gandhi Maidan, Gandhiji, who was driven by Prof. Abdul Bari, President, the *Bihar Congress Committee*, to the prayer meeting in a

car, apologized for having come in a motor car instead of walking to the Prayer meeting.<sup>1</sup>

On the 6th March, Gandhiji walked to the Prayer ground "in perfect peace through a passage lined by lady volunteers." He began his post-Prayer speech by "complimenting the audience as well as Bari Sahab, the President of the Provincial Congress Committee and his comrades for the orderliness which had been successfully maintained during the evening." He received a note about the *Holi* festival on the next day with a request to let people know how it should be celebrated. He expressed his own opinion about it in the post-Prayer speech.

That day Mr. J.W. Houlton, Relief Commissioner, Bihar, met Mahatma Gandhi in the morning and discussed with him the relief measures. Dr. Rajendra Prasad met Mahatma Gandhi in the morning and again in the evening. Shri Jayprakash Narayan also interviewed him. Mr. Jaffar Imam, M.L.A., President of the *Bihar Provincial Muslim League*, and Mr. Maszar Imam, M.L.A., met Mahatma Gandhi in the afternoon and spoke to him about what they thought to be the genesis of the Bihar riots. Later Mr. M. Yunus of the *Muslim League Central Relief Committee* called on Mahatma Gandhi. Members of the *Jehanabad Muslim League Relief Committee* met him after the Prayers and requested him to go to Jehanabad.

On the 7th and 8th March, Mahatma Gandhi received Hindu and Muslim visitors and heard their statements and views about the origin and spread of the riots in Bihar and also about the measures of relief and rehabilitation. In the night of the 7th March, Prof. Abdul Bari had a discussion with Mahatma Gandhi for about forty-five minutes, in the course of which he presented before the latter an account of the activities of the Congress organisations during and after the riots. The same day two other Muslim Congressmen saw Mahatma Gandhi. They were Muhammad Byas of Ashrafpur, a riot-affected village, and President, *Chandi Thana Congress Committee*, and Muhammad Tajuddin, Sec-

1. *The Harijan*, 23rd March, 1947.

retary, *Patna District Congress Committee*. Mr. Yunus had a second interview with Mahatma Gandhi in the morning of the 8th March. Besides meeting the Congress and the League Muslims, Mahatma Gandhi also interviewed some others, who were more or less independent of any affiliation. Thus, on the 8th March, he interviewed Dr. Sachchidanand Sinha, Colonel Mahboob Ahmad (of the I.N.A.), Qazi Ahmad Husain Nazim, *Imarat Sharat, Phafwari Sharif*, Maulvi Noorullah, Secretary, *Bihar Provincial Jamiat-ul-Ulema*, Muhammad Anwar of village Deawan, P.S. Hilsa, and a Shia delegation. By meeting so many persons, Mahatma Gandhi wanted to "sift the various versions and then proceed to the field and communicate his views and feelings to the villagers."<sup>1</sup>

Khan Abdul Chaffar Khan, who had been touring in Bihar for sometime, came to Patna in the night of the 8th March, and after meeting Mahatma Gandhi, acquainted him with the prevailing situation in riot-affected areas and discussed the rehabilitation problems of the Muslim refugees. In the afternoon of the 9th March, Mahatma Gandhi addressed a meeting of the members of the *Bihar Working Committee* and the Presidents and Secretaries of the *District Congress Committee* for about an hour. He emphasised the need of self-introspection and self-purification and asked them all to organise an intensive drive for restoration of communal harmony with courage of conviction. Collection after the Prayer meeting on the 9th March for the *Bihar Muslim Relief Fund* amounted to Rs. 237-15-3.<sup>2</sup>

Till the 11th March, Mahatma Gandhi delivered post-Prayer speeches every evening on the Gandhi Maidan. On the 11th March, he observed in his Prayer address that was his last speech for the time being at Patna; the next day he commenced touring in the adjacent rural areas with the city as the centre. At different meetings he collected funds for the Muslim sufferers. On the 11th March collection for funds amounted to about Rs. 2,000 besides some

1. *The Sunlight*, 10th March, 1947

2. *Ibid.*

ornaments which were yet to be auctioned. He was glad that the women had given ornaments and he reminded them in this connection that "the true ornament of women was a pure heart the place of which could never be taken by any physical adornment." After visiting the village Kamrahar, close to Patna, where he witnessed with great regret the ravages of some Muslim families, he held his Prayer meeting in the evening of the 12th March, near the *Mangles Tank* in Patna City. He pointed out the folly of returning blow for blow and asked the people of Bihar to effect a true change of hearts. The total collection for the *Bihar Muslim Relief Fund* that day was Rs. 105-3-0.

Maulvi Shafi Daudi, formerly a prominent Congressman of the Province met Mahatma Gandhi on the 12th March. Major General Shah Nawaz (of the I.N.A.) came to Patna that day from Delhi in response to a call from Mahatma Gandhi and went straight to the residence of Dr. Mahmud to see him. On the 13th March, Mahatma Gandhi, accompanied by Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, visited the ruined Muslim homes at village Parra, P.S. Phulwari. At village Sipara, on the way, the villagers stopped his car and presented him a purse. On opening it, Mahatma Gandhi found with the coins the following letter of repentance signed by the villagers of Sipara: "Please forgive us our great sin. We feel ashamed for the loss of life and property which our Muslim brethren have suffered at our hands. As tokens of repentance and expiation for our sin, we present you this purse for the relief of the Muslim victims of the disturbances. We again beg your pardon and assure you that such a thing will never happen again."<sup>1</sup>

Mahatma Gandhi delivered his Prayer address that evening at Abdullah Chawk. The collections for the *Bihar Muslims Relief Fund* that day totalled Rs. 149-11-6. In his Prayer speech at Khasrapur, on the 14th March, he appealed to the people "to lend him not only their ears but also their hearts." On the 15th March, Mahatma Gandhi paid a

1. Pyarelal, *Mahatma, The Last Phase*, Vol. I, p. 653.

courtesy call to the Bihar Governor, Sir Hugh Dow,<sup>1</sup> and returned five minutes late to the Prayer ground at the *Benkipur Maidan*.

In the afternoon of the 15th March, Shri Jagat Narayan Lal, M.L.A., some Muslim refugees then working in the *Government Industrial House* at Gulabragh, some members of the *Patna District Muslim Students' Federation*, some Communists and many Muslims of the riot-affected areas met Mahatma Gandhi at Patna. The collections for the *Muslim Sufferers' Relief Fund* that day amounted to Rs. 942-11-3, besides two gold bangles, five silver bangles, one nose-pin, one gold ring, and one set of gold buttons. The Bihar Ministers met Mahatma Gandhi in the afternoon of the 16th March and had certain discussions with him particularly on the points mentioned by the Bihar Governor the previous day. Some others, who interviewed Mahatma Gandhi that day, were representatives of the refugees of the *Phulwari Relief Camp*, Mr. Syed Akhtar Ahmad and his party, Mr. Abdul Bari Saqui, and Shri Birendra Bahadur Sinha, M.L.A.

At the request of both the Congressmen and the non-Congressmen, Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan had come to Bihar in those tragic days. With unwavering faith in non-violence, and with exemplary straightforwardness, born out

1. The Bihar Governor expressed some views about the prevailing situation in three letters to Mahatma Gandhi, two dated the 17th March and one dated the 22nd March, 1947. In the course of his talk with Mahatma Gandhi the Governor gave him the impression that the Ministers had not taken prompt action, that the guilty persons had not been properly dealt with, and that "the demands of the Muslim League were rejected not on their merits but because they were the League's demands." Mahatma Gandhi thought it necessary to draw the attention of the Ministers to this. He did so the next day, and wrote to the Governor on the 17th March as follows:—"The Ministers present totally refuted all these imputations and the Chief Minister expressed considerable surprise. The Chief Minister said that he and his colleagues had often differed from you on several questions including the minorities. He added, however, that on behalf of himself and his colleagues he had given you the assurance that in their handling of the minority question, they would readily accept your advice even though there were differences between you and them." The Governor later explained his views further. Pyarelal, *Mahatma, The Last Phase*, pp. 635-36.

of his unflinching regard for truth, he spoke out his mind before the members of the different communities and exhorted all to prove themselves worthy for the service of humanity. In a joint gathering of the Hindus, the Muslims and the Sikhs at the *Ganadwara Harmandir*, the birthplace of Guru Govind Singh, in the Patna City, he observed: "India today seems an inferno of madness and my heart weeps to see our homes set on fire by ourselves. I find today darkness reigning over India and my eyes vainly turn from one direction to another to see light"<sup>1</sup> After the meeting was over, the Hindus, the Sikhs and the Muslims went along with him to a mosque, situated close by, and embraced one another with exchange of greetings. Referring to the wonderful effort of his speech, a Press correspondent noted: "The sincerity of the man which shows so transparently in every word he says has left a deep impression on his audiences. There was nothing new in what he said.....Nevertheless, the few simple words coming from a heavy heart struck an answering chord in many of his hearers. The scenes of fraternisation which marked one of the Frontier Gandhi's meetings and the coming together of all communities in places of worship are reminiscent of the Khilafat days."<sup>2</sup>

Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan was moving in the interior of Bihar when Mahatma Gandhi came to Patna. He wrote in a letter to the latter; "You are right. Our *Ahimsa* is on test. When I see the politicians surrounding us wrongly using the name of God and religion to propagate hatred, I begin to hate politics." On receiving a wire from Mahatma Gandhi he joined him soon and henceforth remained with him making speeches when Mahatma Gandhi asked him to do so. On the commencement of Mahatma Gandhi's weekly silence on the 16th March, Badshah Khan addressed the prayer meeting at the Bankipur Maidan at his request. He made "an impassioned appeal to the Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs and all well-wishers of the country to realise the consequences of the fratricidal warfare that was besmirching

1. Quoted in Pyarelal Mahatma, *The Last Phase*, Vol. I, p. 638.

2. *Ibid.*

the fair name of India and urged upon them to make their efforts towards the restoration of sanity, peace and goodwill among the members of the different communities." The total collection made by Mahatma Gandhi at the Prayer meeting in the evening of the 16th March was Rs. 872-13-3.

When Mahatma Gandhi came out of his cottage for a walk in the morning of the 17th March, he met a blind man, who was waiting for him since early morning and wanted to pay him his contributions for the *Muslim Sufferers' Relief Fund*. As Mahatma Gandhi proceeded near him, the latter greeted him smilingly and said with folded hands, "Mahatma Maharaj, I am unfortunate. I cannot see you with these blind eyes of mine. I shall be satisfied if I get a good touch of yours." Mahatma Gandhi put his hands on the shoulders of the blind man, but could not speak to him as he was observing silence. The poor blind beggar then paid one rupee to Mahatma Gandhi as his contribution for the *Relief Fund*. He expressed that he hoped to collect more to pay that to Mahatma Gandhi for the *Relief Fund*.

On the 17th March, Mahatma Gandhi left Patna on a six-day tour of villages, north of Patna, which were the scenes of serious riots. Besides his party, he was accompanied by Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, Mr. Usam Khan, M.L.A., Shri Anugraha Narayan Sinha, Makhdum Shah of the *Majlis-i-Ahram*, some members of the executive of the *Bihar Provincial Congress Committee*, including Shri Nand Kumar Singh, General Secretary, and Shri Abdul Hyat Chand, Secretary. Among the officers of the *Patna District Congress Committee* present there, were Shah Ozair Munem, President, and Shri Awadhesh Kumar Sinha, General Secretary.

On the 17th March, Mahatma Gandhi addressed a Prayer meeting at Masaurhi. From thirty to forty thousand men and women attended this Prayer meeting. All listened to the verses from the *Koran* in pin-drop silence, and a very large section of them participated in the recital of the *Ram-dhan*. Accompanied by Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, Mahatma Gandhi waited for about an hour and a half in the riot-



affected places. In this tour he visited Rahmaaganj, Makana and Paramibazar.

In his post-Prayer speech at Bir, situated about eight miles from Masaurhi, on the 18th March, Mahatma Gandhi referred to his visit to Masaurhi and "described with emotion the wreckage he had witnessed" there.<sup>1</sup> He read two letters which he had received on his way to Bir. The first one of these ran:—

"We the inhabitants of Sain are regretful for your sorrow caused by our irresponsible behaviour. We are all sorry for the tragedy which has occurred. Here, however, we Hindus and Muslims lived like brothers despite lawlessness outside. We are happy and proud to tell you that even today we are living like brothers at Sain. We seek your blessings that we may continue together in love and harmony."

The second letter, written by the inhabitants of village Barni, was as follows:—

"When the riot was rampant all round we formed a peace committee, and prevented disturbances penetrating our area. There was absolutely no difference here between Hindus and Muslims. Even today we are working on the same lines, and we assure you that we will always continue to live as brothers." A Hindu student wrote in a letter to Mahatma Gandhi which he handed over to him in the evening of the 17th March, when a special train carrying Mahatma Gandhi passed through the Ferozpur Railway station: "I am very sorry for the riots. I shall not vex Muslim students any more. I request them to come back to their villages."<sup>2</sup> That day's collections for *Bihar Muslim Relief Fund* amounted to Rs. 567-8-0.

On the 18th March, Mahatma Gandhi had a meeting and some discussions with the Muslim refugees at Masaurhi. Meeting all their arguments, he stressed the need for restoration of cordiality.

1. *The Harijan*, 6th March, 1947.

2. *The Sunlight*, 18th March, 1947.

The task was indeed a very difficult one. On the 19th March, he had a meeting at Bīr with the local Congressmen in the presence of Shri Nand Kumar Singh, Shah Uzair Munzoni,<sup>1</sup> Abdul Hyat Ghand and some others. He made a passionate appeal to the Congressmen present there to dedicate themselves to the task of restoring amity among the members of the two communities. After this meeting was over, Mahatma Gandhi "in a low, impassioned voice shared his anguish with Badshah Khan, who sat listening with a grave face."<sup>2</sup> Soon Badshah Khan went away from that place, and only one of the Secretaries of Mahatma Gandhi remained there. Turning to him sadly Mahatma Gandhi exclaimed, "You see where I stand!"<sup>3</sup> Again on that day Mahatma Gandhi met at Bīr representatives of 15 to 20 circles, who received sound advice from him about the formation of a volunteer corps and a *panchayat* for the service of the refugees and riot victims in those affected areas.

While going to the Prayer ground that evening, Mahatma Gandhi visited Andari and Gornuakhari, two villages in Misaurhi area, which had been very severely affected by the riots. At Andari he received the following letter of repentance, signed by sixty persons:—

"Reverend Bapu,

At your sacred feet, we of Andari and the surrounding villages declare with God as witness that we are extremely sorry for what has happened. The occasion which has brought you here and which has caused you so much pain is a matter of shame for us. We swear before you that we of Andari and the surrounding villages will henceforth regard the Muslims as our blood-brothers as we used to before the unfortunate occurrence. For the sin we have committed we beg your and God's pardon.

People of Andari and the surrounding villages."

1. Now a Minister of the Bihar Government.

2. Pyaralal, *Mahatma Gandhi, The Last Phase, Vol. I, p. 684*.

3. *Ibid.*

At Corraikhari, before Prayer, Mahatma Gandhi collected funds for the Muslim sufferers. In the post-Prayer speech, he asked the people to learn Urdu language and do proper penance for their crimes. The collections on the 19th March totalled Rs. 1205-8-6, including paises received at Andari and some other places.

After staying at Bar for two days, from where he visited many neighbouring villages including Bahama and Harla, Mahatma Gandhi returned to Masaurhi on the 20th March, and delivered a speech after his Prayer that evening. Mr. Nalkar and Dr. G. M. Dadoo, South African Delegate, to the Asian Conference, and Sardar J. J. Singh, President of the India League, America, met Mahatma Gandhi that day. On the 21st March, Mahatma Gandhi went to village Hansdiha, in thans Masaurhi, where he met about 50 representatives of Muslim refugees from several neighbouring villages and replied to questions put by some of them. He had also a meeting there at 2.30 P.M. with the village representatives and told them that he had come to effect reconciliation between the two communities or die in attempting to do so. He held his Prayer that evening at village Ghorhuan. This was followed by a speech in which he asked the audience to repent for their sins and to devote themselves to the service of the afflicted people. He congratulated those Hindus, who had given shelter and protection to the Muslims even at the risk of their own lives. After the Prayer meeting Mahatma Gandhi, accompanied by Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, Major General Shah Nawaz and Dr. Anugraha Narayan Sinha visited the village of Thalpara and then returned to Hansdiha where he spent the night.

On Gandhiji's arrival at Masaurhi, fifty persons who were accused in riot cases and were absconding, surrendered. He hoped that many others, who had been involved in the riots, would similarly turn up, admit their guilt and accept whatever punishment is meted out to them. That day's collection for *Bihar Muslim Relief Fund* amounted to Rs. 718-3-7½.

With Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, Major General Shah Nawaz, Miss Manu Gandhi and Dr. Anugraha Narayan Sinha,

in his company, Mahatma Gandhi left Hansdihā at 6 A.M. on the 22nd March, 1947, by car and after a long walk got down from it for his morning walk. After walking for about three miles, Mahatma Gandhi and his party reached Kharant. From Kharant they proceeded to Pipawan in the Dinapur Subdivision, where Mahatma Gandhi addressed a big gathering. He observed that "he was glad to hear from the Subdivisional Officer of Dinapur and others that people of this area remained in peace and did not fight against one another like their neighbours in the neighbouring villages. It pleased him all the more when he was informed that people of this area saved people from butchery and murder. He would be the happiest man if both Hindus and Muslims of this area emulated the example set by the inhabitants of this place and hoped that this Province would become an ideal for the whole country." At the same village Mahatma Gandhi met a large number of Muslim refugee women in the house of Mr. Akhtar. He gave them a message of solace and asked them to be brave and go back to their respective village homes. "Of course," he said, "if he were a victim he also might not have dared to go back to a place where there was blood, etc. But if the Hindus repented and welcomed them back, cleared the debris and helped them in rehabilitation he did not see any reason why they should not go there." Speaking further, Mahatma Gandhi observed that "there should not be any spirit of retaliation. God is just and do not blame Him, but pray to Him to give you sufficient strength." Mahatma Gandhi and his party then motored to Patna.

In his post-Prayer speech at the *Baskihar Masjid* in the evening of the 22nd March, Mahatma Gandhi summed up the impressions of his several days' tour in the Masaurhi area. He "expressed satisfaction with the attitude of the villagers who were not only genuinely penitent over the past happenings but were also willing to atone for the past in the manner he might suggest. Liberal contributions, as liberal as it could be in rural India, were made by them for the relief of the Muslims and even when he drove in

the car he was stopped and presented with purses.<sup>1</sup> Amount collected that day in the Prayer meeting was Rs. 262-7-0. Mahatma Gandhi's tour in Bihar was, indeed, producing a magic effect in restoring confidence among the Muslims.

As it was the day of Mahatma Gandhi's weekly silence, his written speech in *Hindustan* was read out at the Prayer meeting on the *Bankipar Maidan* in the evening of the 23rd March. Through it he conveyed a fervent message of love as the truest means of serving God's creation.

On the 24th March, Mahatma Gandhi visited Bahrama, 16 miles from Patna, accompanied by Miss Manu Gandhi, Prof. Abdul Bari and Dr. Anugraha Narayan Sinha. He was shown there ten Hindu houses, that had been damaged during the riots, and was told that some Hindus had been killed also. That evening a noisy Prayer meeting was held at Rajghat on the bank of the river Poonpoo, and the Prayer speech was shortened due to the enthusiasm of a large number of women among the audience, who were not used to meetings. Mahatma Gandhi confined himself to a reference about village Bahrama and his reaction to it. Collections made by Mahatma Gandhi at the Rajghat Prayer meeting amounted to Rs. 322-0-9, including Rs. 51 contributed by the students of the Shorumpur H.E. School. Miss Gladys Owen, an associate of Miss Muriel Lester (Mahatma Gandhi's London hostess), who met Mahatma Gandhi on the 23rd March and offered her co-operation for rehabilitation work in the riot-affected areas of the Province, left Patna on the 24th March to visit Ramzanpur, an affected village in the Bihar Sharif Subdivision of the Patna District. Major General Shah Nawaz proceeded to Masaurhi that day for rehabilitation work with instructions from Mahatma Gandhi regarding this matter.<sup>2</sup>

Mahatma Gandhi had his Prayer and post-Prayer speech in the afternoon of the 25th March at the *Bankipar Maidan*. That day's collections at the Prayer meeting amounted to Rs. 115-8-0. Sir C. P. N. Singh, Vice-Chancellor, Patna

1. *The Harizon*, 6th April, 1947.

2. *The Searchlight*, 26th March, 1947.

University, had his second interview with Mahatma Gandhi. Rai Bahadur Shyam Nandan Sahay, General Secretary, *Bihar Landholders' Association*, also met Mahatma Gandhi with a request of the *Zamindars* to wait on him in deputation to represent the views of the landholders regarding the proposed legislation for the abolition of *Zamindari*. Dr. Anugraha Narayan Sinha, Finance Minister, had about an hour's interview with him in the course of which he discussed relief and rehabilitation measures. Other interviews that day were of Mr. Latifur Rahman, Member of the *Working Committee, All India Muslim League*, Minister, Badruddin and Mawhar Imam of the *Provincial Muslim League*, Mr. Kamal Das of the *Daw Sangh*, and Mr. Mathura Tiwari of the *Khad Vidyapeya* of Darbhanga. Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, accompanied by Mr. Alam Khan, returned from Bhagalpur that morning. Miss Gladys Owen, who returned to Patna that afternoon from Bihar Sharif, left for Lucknow in the night.<sup>1</sup> The Prayer and post-Prayer speech on the 25th March were arranged at the *Baskipur Masjid*. Mahatma Gandhi reached Jehanabad in the Gaya District on the 26th March, 1947. He had in his company Dr. Anugraha Narayan Sinha, Shah Omair, Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, Mahant Bhagbat (Bhagwan) Das, Shri Nand Kumar Singh, Shri Girish Tiwary and some others including Shri S.N. Singh, Subdivisional Officer of Jehanabad. The Jehanabad subdivision of the Gaya district was the worst affected area of its four subdivisions. For certain reasons the safer sections of the people could not check the fury of the riots. But some comparatively unknown Congress workers afforded protection to the Muslims at grave risks. One such worker was Sakal Babu, a local Head Master. Taking his students and some others with himself, he moved frequently in the villages of Daulatpur, Nagama and Rasulpur until the Muslims of those parts had shifted to Jehanabad. His example inspired the Hindus of Daulatpur to guard Muslim houses even about nine months after the riots.<sup>2</sup>

1. *The Southlight*, 26th March, 1947.

2. Pyarelal, *Mahatma Gandhi, The Last Phase*, Vol. I, p. 669.

After taking a rest for sometime, Mahatma Gandhi and his party proceeded to the Kako relief camp, where 500 refugees were then staying. They burst into tears on seeing him. But he gave them consolation and said that "to break under one's sorrow did not become the brave people. All religions taught that sorrow should be bravely borne." He visited also village Saistabad in the Ghosi Police Station. Referring to the works of devastation, Mahatma Gandhi had seen during his visit to those two places, he asked the Hindus in his post-Prayer speech that evening at Jehanabad "to take a vow never to slip into madness again. Nor should they think of taking revenge for the incidents of the Punjab or the like. Would they themselves become beasts, simply because others happened to sink to that level. If ever they became mad again, they should destroy him first. His Prayer in that case would be that God may give him the strength to pray to Him to forgive his murderers, that is, to purify their hearts. He prayed that God may enable him to show by example what true bravery was. No one could mistake arson and murder of innocent women and children as a brave act. It was cowardice of the meanest type."<sup>1</sup> Referring to a complaint from the Hindus of Kako enumerating their sufferings at the hands of the Muslim *comrades*, Mahatma Gandhi "interpreted it as intended to minimise their own offence against the Mussalmans. It was not manliness to attempt to do so."<sup>2</sup> He again referred with regret to a report that he had heard of the Hindus threatening the Muslims that they would wreak vengeance on them after his departure. "It ill became the votaries of the Ramayana," he said, "to try to suppress the fourteen or fifteen percent of the Muslims in their midst. Men aspiring to be free could hardly think of enslaving others. If they tried to do so, they would only be binding their own chains to slavery tighter. It became their duty to go and beg forgiveness of the Mussalmans, and by their true repentance they should try to persuade them to go back to their own homes. They should rebuild their houses. They should make their sorrow their own."<sup>3</sup>

1. *The Samakshi*, the 26th March, 1947.

2. *Ibid* 3 *Ibid*.

The atmosphere was so viciously surcharged with suspicion and distrust that even Mahatma Gandhi's sincerity was most unfortunately doubted by the *Muslim League*. When some members of the *Provincial Muslim League* had visited Mahatma Gandhi at Patna, he in good humour asked them if they would accommodate in their houses, their "enemy No. 1" (meaning himself), when he went to Jehanabad. They told him in reply that they did not regard him as their enemy and that they would most gladly welcome him and his party. Mahatma Gandhi promised to stay with them at Jehanabad. But his party was a big one, and one of his Secretaries had, without consulting him, arranged for his and his party's stay as guests of the Government. When Mahatma Gandhi came to know of it he felt sorry and tried to meet the *Muslim League* friends to express regret. But none of them was available. Again on reaching Jehanabad, he sent for them, but to no effect. He was intensely pained to hear that they had passed a resolution accusing him of "a breach of promise", and referred to it most sorrowfully in his Prayer speech that evening before a vast assemblage of people on the extensive ground near the Inspection Bungalow pointing out the bitter effects of "misunderstanding one's opponent and hastily attributing motives without adequate proof."<sup>1</sup>

"I was greatly pained," he said, "at such a resolution. Take from me as much service as you can take. My life stands for truth and my mission is 'do or die'. A person who wants to work in such a manner should not be treated in such a way."

The feeling of bitterness was expressed also at another place. On the morning of the 27th March, Mahatma Gandhi went to the villages of Amathua and Belai. At Amathua there was a *Muslim League Relief Camp*. A representative of the Muslim refugees there read out to him from a piece of paper some words full of acrimony. The rehabilitation scheme was described as "a big fraud" and it was held that neither the Congress nor the Government had the "slightest inten-

1. Pyarelal, *Mahatma Gandhi, The Last Phase*, Vol. I, p. 678



tion" of "really doing any thing."<sup>1</sup> Mahatma Gandhi observed before the man that the "memorandum was one of cowardice. Fear will not help any minority."<sup>2</sup> Mahatma Gandhi visited the house of Chanderu Mahto of village Belai, who had risked his life to give shelter to eighteen Muslims. Some Muslims, present at the Belai village, told Mahatma Gandhi that on hearing of his intended visit that day, the Hindus of the locality had repaired the damaged houses by working for the whole night so that he might not know the nature and extent of damage. One such house was actually shown to him. The Subdivisional Officer of Jehanabad, who was accompanying Mahatma Gandhi, said that the repair was done by the Government in their scheme of rehabilitation work. Mahatma Gandhi made no comment. But in the noon one Sobrati Khan, a stalwart Pathan of that village, met Mahatma Gandhi in his camp at the Ghosi village and told him that the house, which had been shown to him, belonged to his brother, who had been killed in the riot. He expressed his willingness to go back to his own village, and said to the Pressmen, "why should I not go back to the village when I know that the Hindu villagers saved 35 Muslim lives and told the mob of ten thousand, who even threatened them with death, that there was no Muslim hiding in their houses? Not only did these Hindu villagers give them shelter but helped them reach the *Thana*. Unfortunately some were killed on the way by a crowd. Because of the *Leagar's* effort Hindus of the village are implicated in the riots although my Hindu villagers were really innocent."<sup>3</sup>

Mahatma Gandhi's party reached Ghosi at 8 A.M. The Muslim gentleman, who had read out the "offensive paper" at the *Anathas Relief Camp*, met him there. He told Mahatma Gandhi that they had faith in him and in no one else, and he continued to indict the Government. Mahatma Gandhi tried to impress upon him that the Hindus and the Muslims

1. *Ibid.*

2. *The Swastika*, 244 March, 1947.

3. *Ibid.*

must live together and as friends and that all should avoid bitterness and enmity.

Before holding the Prayer meeting that evening (27th March) at Okri, Mahatma Gandhi visited three other riot-affected villages. In his Prayer speech there he warned the Indians that by mutual quarrels and bitterness they might lose the independence which was almost within their grasp.

There was then a Police strike in Bihar from the 24th March, 1947. On the 20th March, the Subdivisional Officer of Gaya convicted a police *Headler* of contempt of court. At this the police of Gaya immediately gave a strike notice, unless the *Headler* was given redress and the Subdivisional Officer was punished. The District Magistrate ordered for immediate enquiry into the matter. Two *Headlers* were suspended in Patna for what the Government considered to be "serious misconduct." But the strike commenced from the 24th March. Soon it spread to Patna and Monghyr. About fifty members of the Patna constabulary held demonstration before the Assembly. Military help, including that of British Troops, was requisitioned. There was firing from both sides as a result of which some constables were killed and many were injured. One soldier received several injuries, which proved to be fatal. Two outsiders were killed accidentally at Patna in exchange of shots.

On the 27th March, Mr. A.F. Hamid, Inspector General of Police, Bihar, issued the following personal message to the constables, who had been on strike in the Province: "Do not cover yourself with shame through your own actions. Do not earn ignominy for yourself in the annals of the Province. Even now you can save yourself by returning to your duties. It is your Government that is in power and you are part of that Government.

Mahatma has shown that even a murderer has a heart whose chords can be so touched that he is moved to repentance and can be made to admit his guilt. Remember Mahatma's teaching that guilt should be acknowledged no matter what legal penalties the admission entails.

I assure you all that the Government will prove itself just and merciful."

Some policemen met Mahatma Gandhi at Jehanabad on the 28th March and again later at Patna. He pointed out to them that their "strike was ill-advised" and asked them to call it off immediately and unconditionally. The next day, Shri Ramanand Tiwary, President of the *Police-men's Association* who had been absconding, met Mahatma Gandhi at Patna with Shri Jayprakash Narayan and under his advice surrendered to Government after issuing the following statement: "I have talked to Gandhiji and have come to the conclusion that I should surrender myself. I feel that that is the only way of succeeding in the struggle in which the policemen are engaged. I appeal to my comrades that they should give up the strike and rejoin duty. I also appeal to Gandhiji that he should take up our case and obtain for us justice." But nothing could be done then to reform police administration and the Government dealt with the matter in the usual way. Shri Ramanand Tiwary was sentenced to imprisonment and was released on the eve of the elections of 1951-52.

In the morning of the 28th March, Mahatma Gandhi replied to some questions of the Muslim refugees at Jehanabad. In the afternoon he again met the Muslim refugees and the representatives of the surrounding villages. The questions that had been asked at the morning meeting and Mahatma Gandhi's replies to them were read out to them. They then asked other questions. Mahatma Gandhi expressed his agreement with their views that their property, which had been sold at very low prices, should be made purchasable exactly at those prices, that police outposts should be established at the places where looting or destruction of property was continuing, and that the officers against whom the charges of neglect of duty would be proved after inquiry should be punished. When it was suggested to Mahatma Gandhi that steps should be taken against the communally minded members of the Congress, Mahatma Gandhi observ-

1. Pyarelal, *Mahatma Gandhi, The Last Phase*, Vol. I, p. 678.

ed that "unlike the *Muslim League* and the *Hindu Mahasabha*, the Congress was meant to serve all. If it belied its nationalist character, it would destroy itself."<sup>1</sup>

One of the refugees asked: "Does the experience that you have had and the atmosphere that you find around lend you any hope of success in your mission of re-establishing lost confidence between the Hindus and Muslims?" Mahatma Gandhi replied: "Man can only try. The result is in the hands of God." He then asked the representatives of the villages to cleanse their hearts completely.

In a meeting with the Congressmen, Mahatma Gandhi was asked: "The Muslims who fled from their homes are trying to sell their properties at cheap rates and the Hindus naturally want to purchase them. Should they do so?" He replied: "Honesty demands that the deal should be fair. The Hindus should pay the Muslims a fair price for their property. As a matter of fact, instead of buying it they should hold it in trust." "Should we ask the Hindus not to buy their property?" he was again asked. "Yes. But it should not develop," he said, "into a boycott as in Noakhali. We should not take advantage of Muslim distress."

After his meeting with the policemen at Jehanabad on the 26th March, Mahatma Gandhi with Badshah Khan and party visited Malhoti, Gangasagar, Bela and Allahganj villages. He narrated the painful experiences of his visit to those devastated localities in his post-Prayer speech that evening at Allahganj. Accompanied by Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan and party, Mahatma Gandhi returned to Patna by a special train on the 28th March.

A highly unfortunate and tragic incident had occurred near Patna a few hours earlier. Prof. Abdul Bari, President of the *Bihar Provincial Congress Committee* and a fearless patriot of unbending zeal, unimpeachable integrity, with ascetic mode of living and with selfless devotion to the service of

1. *Ibid.*, p. 473.

the country, was shot dead at about 7 P.M. on the 28th March near Khusarupur on his way back from Dhanbad. The assailant was an ex-I.N.A. man working in Bihar Government's Anti-smuggling Force. The death of this beloved leader plunged the whole Province into grief and gloom. His death was a great loss for the whole country. Paying his tributes to this great leader of the masses, Acharya Kripalani, the Congress President, observed in a statement to the Press: "I am deeply shocked and grieved to hear of the tragic murder of Prof. Abdul Bari. His death has robbed India of one of its bravest and most self-less soldiers of freedom. He was utterly free from communal bias and knew himself only as an Indian. His was a dedicated life filled with a passion for the service of the working classes." "He was a friend of the poor and met sudden death while serving their cause," said Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan to the representative of the United Press of India on the 29th March.

In the morning of the 29th March, the body of Prof. Bari was brought from the morgue to his Langartoli house. It was then taken to the *Masam*, where it lay draped in tri-colour. Mahatma Gandhi, Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan and the Bihar Ministers went there that morning to pay their last homage to this departed hero. Later they all visited Prof. Bari's house for condolence. "As the mortal remains of the departed patriot lay on the bier awaiting the funeral, draped in flowers, streams of people, men, women and children, Hindus and Muslims, high and low, passed by offering their homage. Among the wreaths placed on the bier was one from His Excellency Sir Hugh Dow and Lady Dow."<sup>1</sup>

At his post-Prayer speech that evening, Mahatma Gandhi spoke most touchingly about the death of Prof. Bari and paid an eloquent testimony to his greatness. Mahatma Gandhi's heart-felt appeals to the people of Bihar had a profoundly sober influence on their minds. But many of the afflicted Muslims still entertained feelings of suspicion and

1. *The Searchlight*, 30th March, 1947.

distrust. The Bihar Provincial Muslim League continued to press its demand for 'pockets' for resettlement of the Muslims. A section of the Muslim League talked of the 'partition' of Bihar, the Muslim area, according to them, including the Patna and Purnea districts, south Bhagalpur, south Monghyr, Jehanabad and Nawadah Subdivisions and a portion of the Sadar Subdivision of Gaya district. A pamphlet, entitled *Divide Bihar*, was issued by the *Muslim Students' Federation* during the second session of the '*Dinman of Bihar Conference*,' held at Gaya in April, 1947. Syed Jafar Imam, President of the *Bihar Provincial Muslim League*, wrote in the Foreword to this pamphlet:—"The general massacre of the Musalmans of Bihar by the Hindus, has proved beyond doubt that the Hindus and Muslims are two nations, and, therefore, they must separate. The Musalmans living in Pakistan zones will soon have their own independent sovereign state, since Pakistan is a certainty and no power on earth can prevent it now. But what will happen to the five million Muslims of Bihar, who form a minority of 13 per cent and are surrounded by a hostile majority all over the Province?.....After full consideration, we have come to believe now that our salvation lies only in establishing an independent homeland for us in some part of the Province of Bihar where we may be able to concentrate our entire population.....I.....fully support the demand for the separation of Chotanagpur and Santal Parganas from Bihar."

The *Bihar Provincial Muslim League Conference* was held at Kishanganj, District Purnea, in the month of May, 1947, with the Hon'ble Raja Ghazanfar Ali in the chair. Besides criticising the Bihar Government for some of its measures in relation to the riots, it passed a resolution demanding the inclusion of Purnea, North Bhagalpur, North Monghyr and the Santal Parganas in the Province of Bengal and also "cautioned the muslims against *Jamiat Ulema, Akhara, Ehat-sar* and Hon'ble Mr. Abdul Quayum Ansari, who were called traitors to the country."<sup>1</sup>

1. *Report on Riots in Bihar during the second half of May, 1947.*

Along with the demand for the formation of separate Muslim pockets, were the demands for giving arm licences to the Muslims and for reserving 50 percent appointments in the police for the Muslims. Gandhiji could not concede these demands as their effect would have been aggravation of mutual suspicion and hostility.

Unfortunately the *Muslim League* failed to understand the true significance of Mahatma Gandhi's viewpoints. This is clear from the correspondence that passed between Mahatma Gandhi and Syed Abdul Aziz in the month of April, 1947.<sup>1</sup> Syed Abdul Aziz wrote to him on the 21st April: "Your opposition to the formation of small colonies in which the Muslims hopelessly scattered could live with safety and your determination to disallow even a few guns to the needy Muslims have deeply depressed me and many others..... The right of private defence is a human and natural right and has been recognised.... ..universally in all countries of the world..... You have, I regret to say, repeatedly said..... that you could not allow anyone the right of private defence. If your idealism was tempered with realism you would probably have changed your views. Muslims faced with overwhelming majority in seven out of eleven provinces feel that your law, if practised, would spell disaster for them."

"My opposition to the formation of colonies," replied Mahatma Gandhi on the 25th April, "is restricted to the Government co-operation even to the extent of land acquisition. I should have no objection to affected Muslims congregating in Muslim areas. There should be no check on free movement or migration.

Your legal acumen should have prevented you from making the sweeping remark that I had ever denied the right of self-defence. That right does not and ought not to carry with it the licence to bear arms. A moment's reflection would show you its futility. What you want probably to convey is that it is the right of the citizen, however humble he or she may be, to demand protection by the State against

1. Quoted in Pyarelal, *The Last Phase*, Vol. I, pp. 684-686.

thieves, robbers and miscreants. A Government that fails to perform that duty forfeits all claims to govtns. Let me add, too, that neither during my stay in England nor for 20 years in Africa did I ever know a Westerner feeling incompetent to defend himself without arms when and if the occasion arose. Like several superstitions this one you name seems to be confined only to this unhappy land of ours."

Syed Abdul Aziz again wrote on the 26th April: "You seem to have missed two main points which I made in my previous letter. Formation of colonies for scattered Muslims is not possible except, perhaps, in 2 or 3 places of the affected areas, without co-operation of the Government. Land sufficient even for a small colony is not in possession of the Muslims. Unless, therefore, the Government acquired building sites, colonies cannot be established. Government have in many cases acquired large tracts of land.....for public purposes, but they refuse to do so for the protection of the Muslims. If your opposition to the formation of colonies is based on the attitude of the Bihar Government and not on the merits of the proposition, we would feel that you have not exercised your vast influence with them."

"If my remark regarding your denial of the right of private defence is, in your opinion, sweeping, it is based upon your own reported speeches in which you have shown, without reservation, your opposition to the right of private defence with firearms. It is not clear from your reply whether you support the right of private defence, if it is exercised with swords, kirpans, axes and *lathis*, etc. and not with firearms. If a body of only 20 or 30 Muslims or Hindus are attacked by a mob of, say, only 200 variously armed, what is their chance to defend themselves successfully unless they possess better weapons—guns or rifles? You seem to be very favourably impressed with the ways of a Westerner. Do you really think that he, as a rational and practical man would not resort to firearms, if available, in self-defence? If he was circumstanced as a member of a communal minority, similar to one in India, he would ask not only for a gun or a rifle but even for more deadly and effective weapons."



How are the Muslims in Bihar—13%—to protect themselves when they are rushed upon by a hostile Hindu mob vastly superior in numbers, and not without some other advantages by having their own people in power?

"The Bihar Government have totally failed to protect the Muslims against organised dacoity, arson and murder ..... The Government which have failed now will fail in future too, and therefore, some guns and rifles are a necessity for a weak party without relieving the Government of their duty and responsibility to provide their own ways and means for the protection of a small minority like the Muslims in Bihar."

In reply Mahatma Gandhi wrote on the 28th April: "If any of my actions were based on the attitude of the Ministers I would be of little use here. I have come, if I can, to serve the Muslim minority of Bihar as I was in Nonkhalia to serve the Hindu minority. In so doing my fond belief was and is that I should serve the majority too. Thus I was, and am, against pockets promoted by authority in either case and so against firearms. That way lies strife, not friendship, whose roots are firmly fixed in love, not fear. Man can but perish in the attempt. Success is from God.

If the Hindus are to be considered as a hostile community for all time, I confess that segregation is the safest policy. That is the logic of Pakistan which I have opposed knowing full well that I might find myself in the minority of one."

Syed Abdul Aziz wrote in his last letter, dated the 29th April: "The Government were already opposed to and were niggardly in allowing a gun to a Muslim and now they will refuse it without the least compunction. The policy of the Government supported by you should help Muslims to decide either to surrender completely to the Congress or to abandon the Province for good."

To it Gandhiji replied on the same day: "You are less than right when you say that 'the policy of the Government supported by you should help Muslims to decide either to surrender completely to Congress or to abandon the

Province for good.' My policy is no firearms to civilians in the ordinary course and perfect protection to every citizen, be he poor or rich. If I know anything of the Government of Bihar, they do not want Muslims or anyone else to surrender to the Congress or leave the Province for good."

Mahatma Gandhi left Bihar on the 30th March to attend on the 1st April the Inter-Asian Relations Conference at Delhi. The Conference was "a great event for all of us who belong to Asia", as Mahatma Gandhi said. It was a symbol of the growing sense of the unity of Asia, whose resurgence is one of the most marvellous phenomena in modern history. Mahatma Gandhi came back to Bihar in a few days, as his mission here had not been fulfilled. In his post-Prayer meeting in the *Bastipur Maidan* on the 14th April, he referred among other things to his talks with the Viceroy at Delhi in the course of which the latter had said that he was going to be the last Viceroy of India and that too upto 30th June, 1948. On the 15th April was issued from New Delhi the following joint appeal of Mahatma Gandhi and Mr. Jinnah:

"We deeply deplore the recent acts of lawlessness and violence that have brought the utmost disgrace on the fair name of India and the greatest misery to innocent people irrespective of who were the aggressors and who were the victims.

We denounce for all time the use of force to achieve political ends and we call upon all the communities of India, to whatever persuasion they may belong, not only to refrain from all acts of violence and disorder but also to avoid both in speech and writing any word which might be construed as an incitement to such acts."

Besides his mission of peace, other matters like the activities of the various constructive work organisations, national education, *Harijans* uplift, administration, relationship between the *Zamindars* and *Kisans* engaged Mahatma Gandhi's attention during his stay in Bihar. In his own unique way he gave the most wholesome advice to all in his various speeches, emphasising self-examination and purification

and on regard for truth and non-violence. He held before the administration the ideals of simplicity, honesty, and fellowship, and enjoined upon the officers the need for using articles of Indian manufacture for themselves and the members of their family.

Unceasing and sincere efforts of the Government and of some other agencies were undoubtedly accelerating relief and rehabilitation works. Time was also producing its healing effect. Some prominent members of the I.N.A. were rendering valuable services for such humanitarian works to soothe the wounded feelings of those, who had lost their dear and near ones and also their property during the period of temporary communal madness. Over and above all, the noblest prophet of the modern world, Mahatma Gandhi, stood as an angelic source of inspiration, solace and comfort for the aggrieved and the afflicted at this period of a dire calamity and acute trial in the history of our State and of the country as a whole, when prejudices, passions and communal frenzy had clouded human judgment to a very large extent.

Among the members of the I.N.A., Major General Shah Nawaz was greatly assisting the Bihar Rehabilitation work in the Masaurhi *Moss* of the Patna District. On the 29th April, Mahatma Gandhi referred to the following letter of Major General Shah Nawaz from Masaurhi:—

"Rehabilitation work is making steady and satisfactory progress. I feel that a very definite change is coming about in the outlook of Hindu population of the area. As instances I will give three cases:

1. In village Aterpura, we had a meeting and appointed a village *Panchayat*; two days afterwards the head of the *Panchayat* came to Patna, met all the refugees in various camps and assured them that they would welcome them back to their village and that they would guard them even with their lives.

As a result of this nearly fifty Muslim families have returned to the village and are living there very happily. There is no police force stationed there, nor have they asked for any.

When I sent rations there, the Hindus refused to accept them, saying that the Muslims were their guests and that they would make suitable arrangements for their feeding, harvesting their crops, etc.

2. In the second case one Muslim of village Bir came to me and informed me that he wished to go back to his village. This was his first chance to go back after the riots. He was crying and was very much frightened to go alone. I gave him my car and sent two I.N.A. soldiers to accompany him. On the way he met a Hindu member of the Bir village *Panchayat*, who stopped the car and talked to this Muslim and asked him why he was taking soldiers with him. The Muslim informed him that he was frightened. The Hindu friend then told him that it would be a matter of shame for the whole village if after Gandhiji's assurances it was still necessary to take an escort with him; he also assured the Muslim that he would get killed before any harm came to him (the Muslim).

The Muslim gentleman, thereupon, returned to me saying that now he no longer required an escort as he was feeling quite safe.

In Masnuchi most of I.N.A. soldiers are Hindus or Sikhs and are doing excellent work. Outstanding among them is one Lieutenant Kartar Singh who himself carries the beddings of the refugees from the station to their homes and at night he patrols round their houses. Every morning he takes buckets full of milk to the mosque where he personally distributes it to all the children and sick persons.

About three days ago when a Muslim refugee died, Lieutenant Kartar Singh himself dug the grave for his body. All the Muslims are now very fond of him. They invite him to attend their meeting in the mosque.<sup>12</sup>

Major General Shah Nawaz gave in another letter, dated the 2nd May, 1947, the following detailed account of the methods of work so far done at Masnuchi:—

"There are several aspects of the relief work and several problems relating to security, Police co-operation, refugees' morals (moral), construction of houses, changing the mentality

of Hindu and Muslim masses which are continuously cropping up and each problem has to be tackled from a different angle.

From my own experience, I have found that the foremost thing for the success of relief and rehabilitation is that the refugees must feel that their life and their property would be safe on return to their villages.

The behaviour of some of the police during the riots and subsequently has not helped to create this confidence. Secondly, the delay in dealing with culprits, even though it is for reasons of insufficient evidence, has badly shaken any confidence a Muslim might have had. Amongst the Hindus of several places and among the goondas generally there is a feeling of victory and satisfaction over what they have achieved, especially on the prospects of getting the Muslim land at cheaper rates and also the Muslim houses.

The release on bail of such a large number of accused persons has given them a feeling that nothing has happened to them and they can repeat those acts with impunity. The first essential is, therefore, *that the respect for law and order must be re-established.*

I fully realise that it is not possible, nor is it desirable to punish huge numbers of persons who took part in the riots, but it is imperative that the ring-leaders and those who actually instigated and planned these mass slaughters must be brought to book and in some cases at least exemplary punishment should be awarded.

Police men guilty of having failed in their duty or having taken a biased attitude should be punished and for the future most active and vigilant attitude must be maintained by the police, so that immediate steps can be taken to nip the trouble in the bud. *In short sympathetic and active police co-operation is most essential.*

Orders must be issued to all police officers to extend their fullest co-operation to non-official workers. This has been done at Masaurhi and I am getting good co-operation from the police.

### *Progress of work*

Having taken the above steps and having been assured of the police co-operation, I proceeded to organise work at Masaurhi. The most important point, to my mind, in organising relief and rehabilitation work 'is not what has happened but how to ensure against the recurrence of the terrible misdeed'. This can be most satisfactorily achieved, not by formation of large pockets or by arming the people, but by bringing about a real change in the hearts of the people. Our first endeavour must be to achieve this and, if this is impossible, then the question of pockets and arming the people may have to be considered.

My own experience is that it is possible to bring this change, provided the ring-leaders and instigators are promptly and strictly dealt with.

### *Mobilisation of Congress workers*

Working on the above assumption, my first step was to call a meeting of all the Congress workers in the *thana*. The Congress is the most powerful organisation in the Province and it is only through their active co-operation that this change of heart can be effected.

I called for a list of whole-time workers who are prepared to devote at least two months to this work. I then divided the area into ten circles and allocated the Congress workers to each circle.

### *Duties of workers in charge of circles*

1. Numbering all Muslim houses in the riot-affected areas and completion of attached proforma marked A.
2. Arranging to clean up all the Muslim houses, burnt or damaged, during the riots.
3. Recovery of looted property.
4. Helping and encouraging Muslims to come back to their villages.
5. Helping to settle satisfactorily and amicably any disputes regarding crops, looted or deposited property.

6. Assistance in organising village *Panchayats* and lastly the most important point is to bring about a better understanding between the Hindus and Muslims.

This is done by personal contact of workers with the masses by means of lectures, reading of Mahatmaji's post-Prayer speeches to the public. One show was given by the I.N.A. Dramatic party depicting scenes of Hindu-Muslim brotherhood that existed among the soldiers of the *Acad Hind Faj* on the battlefield. I invited the Congress workers in the whole of the *thana* to come and see this drama. I understand that it has had a very good effect. I was told at the meeting of the Congress workers that what the Congress workers could not have achieved in one year has been achieved by the I.N.A. drama in two hours. Other duties that are done by the workers are to bring to my notice names of such persons who are a source of danger to the public security. They also aid the police to track down culprits and to recover abducted girls, looted property, etc. In places where the Muslims feel nervous, some Congress workers are detailed to go and stay with them in those villages, until such time as they feel absolutely secure. Whole-time Congress workers who are sent out on such duties are given free ration and small remuneration of say Rs. 10/- per month to cover their out of pocket expenses.

### *Village Panchayats*

It is my endeavour to establish a *Panchayat* in every village. For the present *Panchayats* have been established in almost all the villages that were affected by the riots.

*Methods* :—Village *Panchayats* consist of five members each. Any community that is in a majority in the village provides three members, while the minority provides two members. The names of Hindus are suggested by the Muslims and the Muslims are selected by the Hindus. The idea is to have the *Panchayat* of men in whom both communities have confidence. A President and a Secretary of the *Panchayat* are also selected.

*Duties of the Panchayat:* Generally, the duties of the Panchayat are the same as those performed by members in-charge of circles. They sign a collective security form in which they undertake to protect the Muslims of the village, their crops and other property. They also take it upon themselves to clean up all the Muslim houses. In many places the Hindu members of the Panchayat have gone to *Refugee Camps* and brought back the Muslim residents of those villages and in many places excellent results have been produced.

### CO-OPERATION WITH THE POLICE

Government orders have been issued to local Police Officers to co-operate whole-heartedly with me in my work of rehabilitation. At Masaurhi I am getting this co-operation.

Congress workers, Refugee Muslims, or Village Panchayats submit names of people who are still instigating or whose presence is harmful to rehabilitation. I verify each report personally and when I am fully convinced of its urgency I give the names of such culprits to the D.S.P., who arranges through the Political Department to have such people arrested. I also send a copy of all such letters to the Ministers in charge.

Whenever any Muslims come to me with their complaints, specially of highhandedness by some *goondas*, I at once confer with Police Officials and insist on immediate action being taken. We share two Jeep Cars that are allotted to Masaurhi.

### CO-OPERATION WITH CIVIL GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS

*The under-mentioned Government Officials are stationed at Masaurhi:—*

1. Area Magistrate
2. Relief Officer
3. Camp Officer
4. Overseer
5. Health Inspector and
6. A small office staff of clerks and peons.



The General policy that is being followed is that the Government Officers must be entirely responsible for the receipt, distribution and accounting of all Government stores, finances, rations, etc., but they have instructions to work under my guidance and distribute stores, relief money, rations, etc., only after consulting and agreeing upon the method with me.

Some forms used by the Relief Officers are attached and are marked 'B'.

Every evening all of us, including the prominent Congress workers, Magistrate's staff, and the police meet and have an informal discussion on the progress of work and on future work. This ensures excellent co-ordination and good team work.

### TRANSPORT

At present we have two Jeep Cars for Officers and two trucks for transporting materials to devastated villages.

### ATTITUDE TOWARDS REFUGEES

There are many problems connected with them.

1. The first and the foremost is to give them a sense of security:—

This is done by:—

- (a) Constant night patrolling by the police and the I.N.A. Lectures to enhance their moral (morale) and to make them have more confidence in themselves and to overcome the 'beggar mentality' that seems to develop in them during their stay at the refugee camps, and

- (b) formation of volunteers for service of the refugees.

2. Construction of houses:—The general policy followed so far is that the Government would by repair or by reconstruction provide as good a house as was destroyed during the riot:—

Then there are various methods that may be adopted in construction of houses:—

- (a) The whole house may be completed by the contractor.

- (b) The overseer estimates the cost of the house and the owner may be given the whole of this amount to construct the house entirely by himself. Should he wish to purchase building material from us at Government control price, facilities are given to him.
- (c) The owner of the house may claim all the building materials estimated by the overseer and labour charges for the repair or reconstruction of his house.

As a matter of policy I encourage refugees to construct their own houses, but where it is not possible the contractors are asked to do so.

For the present I am repairing and reconstructing houses only in places where there is a hope of the Muslims returning to those villages. Any refugee that arrives in Masaurhi is given a priority in the construction of his house.

#### RELIEF GRANT

Relief grant is given to an individual who has suffered during the riots. Of course, it is impossible for the Government to make good all the losses incurred by the inhabitants, but the idea is to provide them enough finances to start their life afresh.

For the grant of relief money, the method adopted is that a committee appointed from among the refugees under the instructions of the Relief Officer prepares a list suggesting the amounts to be paid to each family keeping in view their previous status and occupation. The list is then put up to me for my approval and after it is approved the Relief Officer distributes the money and obtains signatures of the refugees. The Committee and the Relief Officer are authorised to recommend a grant up to Rs. 400/-. Anything above this sum has to have the sanction of the Relief Commissioner.

#### POLICY REGARDING RATIONS

At present I have divided Masaurhi Police Station into one main Camp situated at Masaurhi and four sub-camps situated as under:—

- (a) North Sector at Kara;
 - (b) East Sector at Sain;
 - (c) South Sector at Nadaul; and
 - (d) West Sector at Lakhnaur.

The idea is first to collect all the refugees of Masaurhi Police Station in the main camp and then send them to their sub-camps which are nearest to their place. Protection and security are ensured by posting of Police Force. These sub-camps are treated the same as any refugee camps. There is accommodation at each one of these places for at least 600 to 1000 persons in each camp. The policy being followed in relation to rations, is that those persons who have no rations will be given free rations until their house has been reconstructed and they have been given the relief grant. From the date that the relief grant is made a refugee is allowed two weeks' more free rations to make his final arrangements for settlement, after which his free rations are stopped. At each one of these centres it is intended to open a control ration and cloth shop. Camps at Nadaul and Lakhnaur are functioning and it is hoped that the camp at Kara and Sain will also be opened very soon.

#### OTHER ITEMS OF RELIEF

In addition to the above, it is my policy that the refugees should be allowed to go about doing something in Relief Camps or in their villages. Their economic rehabilitation is as important as rehousing them. For this I have obtained a supply of Karges and yarn for free distribution to all of those refugees who know how to handle them. Supplies of blankets, *dhauts*, *sarees*, clothing, *pagamas* and shirts, soap, etc. are also received and distributed to refugees.

Through the courtesy of the Health Department a milk centre has been started for the children and for convalescent patients. Almost all the children who have returned from Relief Camps are suffering from vitamin deficiency diseases. After two weeks of milk distribution their health has already improved considerably. In addition to this, multiple vitamins and other tinned fruits and vegetables are issued to them.

**Medical aid:** A doctor, who is in charge of the Masaurhi Dispensary, visits these camps regularly to examine and treat the patients. Arrangements have also been made for a Lady Doctor to visit Masaurhi once a week to inspect and to treat women and children.

#### CO-OPERATION WITH OTHER ORGANISATIONS AND CHARITABLE INSTITUTIONS

For the purposes of opening up a *Widows Home* and for teaching handicrafts and cleanliness etc. Mrs. Mukherji, a social worker of Patna, has decided to proceed to Masaurhi with a team of Lady workers. Mrs. Shankar, a Christian Lady, representing some Mission, is also working at Masaurhi.

Mrs. Cartwright of the *American Friends Society* has also promised to supply a stock of milk and cereal food from the U.N.N.R.A. allotments. It is intended to open up a joint milk centre for Hindu and Muslim children. It is expected that this supply of milk will be received soon.

As a matter of principle we welcome the co-operation of all organisations if it is constructive and helpful to the rehabilitation. I do not allow any organisation to interfere in the internal administration of the refugees and I think that this policy should also be followed by the Government."

Returning to Patna on the 15th May, after visiting Delhi and Calcutta, Mahatma Gandhi restarted Prayer meetings exhorting the Hindus to make amends and to look after the refugee camps with care and compassion. On the 19th May, he addressed a large gathering at Barh. He warned the people against the madness of communalism and asked all to have true repentance for what had happened. He addressed Prayer meetings at Hilsa, a badly affected place during the riots, on the 20th May, and at Bikram on the 21st May. Besides appealing to the people for toleration and brotherly affection for members of the different communities, he advised Congressmen to act according to the high ideals of the institution, which had won the confidence of the people, "through years of service." "The Congress should be," he pointed out, "above party intrigues and be

a symbol of unity and service of the whole country."<sup>1</sup> On the 22nd May, Mahatma Gandhi addressed a huge congregation at Fatehpur. Here he pointed out how women could work for rehabilitation. On the 23rd May, he held his Prayer meeting at Maner, where after "making a feeling reference to Saint Makhdam Maneri who lived about eight hundred years ago at Maner," he referred to certain matters relating to administration, the *zamindars*, the peasants and industrial labour. "If all the three—the *zamindars*, the *ryots* and the Government in Bihar did their duty," concluded Mahatma Gandhi, "Bihar would give a noble example to the whole of India."<sup>2</sup>

Before returning to Delhi (25th May, 1947), Mahatma Gandhi replied as follows to certain questions about Hindu-Muslim relations:—

Question: "The Hindus being influenced by your preaching of *ahimsa* may in the near future get beaten by the *Muslim League* followers. This is the general feeling, in view of the belief that the Muslims are being secretly armed on a wide scale."

Gandhi: "The assumption is serious. If it is sound, then it casts a grave reflection upon the Provincial governments. In any event, how I wish that the Hindus were influenced by my teaching of *ahimsa* which is a force mightier than the force of arms, however, powerful. No teacher can be held responsible for a caricature of his teachings. Do we not know how the geometrical propositions are caricatured by indifferent pupils? Are the teachers to be blamed? The utmost that can be said against me is that I am an incompetent teacher of *ahimsa*. If such be the case, let us pray that my successor will be much more competent and successful."

Question: "After the British withdrawal from India, there is a likelihood of chaos and anarchy prevailing in the country. There is a fear that the nationalists, unless they

1. *The Morgan*, 1st June, 1947.

2. *Ibid.*

immediately started learning self-defence with fire arms, may suffer and ultimately find themselves under the heel of the *Muslim League* whose followers believe only in fighting. *Pakistan* or no *Pakistan*, the trouble is coming, because there is the secret hand of imperialism working behind the scenes. Would you not modify your theory of *ahimsa* in the larger context of such a political situation overtaking the country for the sake of individual defence?"

Gandhi: "The nationalists are not worth the proud name they bear, if they fear the *Muslim League* as you imagine. Can the nationalists exclude the members of the *Muslim League* from the sphere of their action? I am not thinking of vote-catching devices. I am thinking of the Muslims as Indians, the same as others, needing their care and attention. If the leaders have ceased to believe in *ahimsa*, they should boldly and frankly say so and set about putting their own house in order. For me, there is no scope for any change. *Ahimsa* is no mere theory with me, it is a fact of life based on extensive experience. How can a man who has tasted the apples and repeatedly found them sweet be induced to describe them as bitter? Those who say they are bitter, have tasted not the apples, but something looking very much like the apples. *Ahimsa* should not fear the secret or open hand of imperialists, assuming for the sake of argument that it is working as suggested in the question."

Section One

THE CHAMPARAN MISSION, 1917-18.

(1) "THE STAIN OF INDIGO

Champaran is the land of King Janaka. Just as it abounds in mango groves, so used it to be full of indigo plantations until the year 1917. The Champaran tenant was bound by law to plant three out of every twenty parts of his land with indigo for his landlord. This system was known as the *tinkathia* system, as three *kathas* out of twenty (which make one acre) had to be planted with indigo.

I must confess that I did not then know even the name, much less the geographical position of Champaran, and I had hardly any notion of indigo plantations. I had seen packets of indigo, but little dreamed that it was grown and manufactured in Champaran at great hardship to thousands of agriculturists.

Rajkumar Shukla was one of the agriculturists who had been under this harrow, and he was filled with a passion to wash away the stain of indigo for the thousands who were suffering as he had suffered.

This man caught hold of me at Lucknow, where I had gone for the Congress of 1916. 'Vakil Babu will tell you everything about our distress,' he said, and urged me to go to Champaran. 'Vakil Babu' was none other than Babu Brajkishore Prasad, who became my esteemed co-worker in Champaran, and who is the soul of public work in Bihar. Rajkumar Shukla brought him to my tent. He was dressed in a black *sirota* *salban* and trousers. Brajkishore Babu failed then to make an impression on me. I took it that he must be some *salit* exploiting the simple agriculturists. Having heard from him something of Champaran, I replied as was my wont: 'I can give no opinion without seeing the condition

with my own eyes. You will please move the resolution in the Congress, but leave me free for the present.' Rajkumar Shukla of course wanted some help from the Congress. Babu Brajkishore Prasad moved the resolution, expressing sympathy for the people of Champaran, and it was unanimously passed.

Rajkumar Shukla was glad, but far from satisfied. He wanted me personally to visit Champaran and witness the miseries of the *ryots* there. I told him that I would include Champaran in the tour which I had contemplated and give it a day or two. 'One day will be enough,' said he, 'and you will see things with your own eyes.'

From Lucknow I went to Cawnpore. Rajkumar Shukla followed me there. 'Champaran is very near here. Please give a day,' he insisted. 'Pray excuse me this time. But I promise that I will come,' said I, further committing myself.

I returned to the *Asram*. The ubiquitous Rajkumar was there too. 'Pray fix the day now,' he said. 'Well,' said I, 'I have to be in Calcutta on such and such a date, come and meet me then, and take me from there.' I did not know where I was to go, what to do, what things to see.

Before I reached Bhupen Babu's place in Calcutta, Rajkumar Shukla had gone and established himself there. Thus this ignorant, unsophisticated but resolute agriculturist captured me.

So early in 1917, we left Calcutta for Champaran, looking just like fellow rustics. I did not even know the train. He took me to it, and we travelled together, reaching Patna in the morning.

This was my first visit to Patna. I had no friend or acquaintance with whom I could think of putting up. I had an idea that Rajkumar Shukla, simple agriculturist as he was, must have some influence in Patna. I had come to know him a little more on the journey, and on reaching Patna I had no illusions left concerning him. He was per-



fictly innocent of everything. The satiks that he had taken to be his friends were really nothing of the sort. Poor Rajkumar was more or less as a menial to them. Between such agriculturist clients and their satiks there is a gulf as wide as the Ganges in flood.

Rajkumar Shukla took me to Rajendra Babu's place in Patna. Rajendra Babu had gone to Puri or some other place, I now forget which. There were one or two servants at the bungalow who paid us no attention. I had with me something to eat. I wanted dates which my companion procured for me from the bazaar.

There was strict untouchability in Bihar. I might not draw water at the well whilst the servants were using it, lest drops of water from my basket might pollute them, the servants not knowing to what caste I belonged. Rajkumar directed me to the indoor latrine, the servant promptly directed me to the out-door one. All this was far from surprising or irritating to me, for I was inured to such things. The servants were doing the duty, which they thought Rajendra Babu would wish them to do.

These entertaining experiences enhanced my regard for Rajkumar Shukla, if they also enabled me to know him better. I saw now that Rajkumar Shukla could not guide me, and that I must take the reins in my own hands."

*(Autobiography of Mahatma Gandhi,  
pp. 194-96)*

## (2) "THE GENTLE BEHARI

I knew Maulana Mazharul Haq in London when he was studying for the bar, and when I met him at the Bombay Congress in 1915—the year in which he was President of the Muslim League—he had renewed the acquaintance, and extended me an invitation to stay with him whenever I happened to go to Patna. I bethought myself of this invitation and sent him a note indicating the purpose of my visit. He immediately came in his car, and pressed me to accept his hospitality. I thanked him and requested him to guide me to my destination by the first available train, the

railway guide being useless to an utter stranger like me. He had a talk with Rajkumar Shukla and suggested that I should first go to Muzaffarpur. There was a train for that place the same evening, and he sent me off by it.

Principal Kripalani was then in Muzaffarpur. I had known of him ever since my visit to Hyderabad. Dr. Choithram had told me of his great sacrifice, of his simple life, and of the Ashram that Dr. Choithram was running out of funds provided by Prof. Kripalani. He used to be a Professor in the Government College, Muzaffarpur, and had just resigned the post when I went there. I had sent a telegram informing him of my arrival, and he met me at the station with a crowd of students, though the train reached there at midnight. He had no rooms of his own, and was staying with Professor Malkani who therefore virtually became my host. It was an extraordinary thing in those days for a Government Professor to harbour a man like me.

Professor Kripalani spoke to me about the desperate condition of Bihar, particularly of the Tirhut division and gave me an idea of the difficulty of my task. He had established very close contact with the Biharis, and had already spoken to them about the mission that took me to Bihar.

In the morning a small group of *sahibs* called on me. I still remember Ramnami Prasad among them, as his earnestness specially appealed to me.

'It is not possible,' he said, 'for you to do the kind of work you have come for, if you stay here (meaning Prof. Malkani's quarters). You must come and stay with one of us. Gaya Babu is a well-known *sahib* here. I have come on his behalf to invite you to stay with him. I confess we are all afraid of Government, but we shall render what help we can. Most of the things Rajkumar Shukla has told you are true. It is a pity our leaders are not here today. I have, however, wired to them both, Babu Brajkishore Prasad and Babu Rajendra Prasad. I expect them to arrive shortly, and they are sure to be able to give you all the information you want and to help you considerably. Pray come over to Gaya Babu's place.'

This was a request that I could not resist, though I hesitated for fear of embarrassing Gaya Babu. But he put me at ease, and so I went over to stay with him. He and his people showered all their affection on me.

Brakishore Babu now arrived from Darbhanga and Rajendra Babu from Puri. Brakishore Babu was not the Babu Brakishore Prasad I had met in Lucknow. He impressed me this time with his humility, simplicity, goodness and extraordinary faith, so characteristic of the Biharis, and my heart was joyous over it. The Bihar *satish*' regard for him was an agreeable surprise to me.

Soon I felt myself becoming bound to this circle of friends in life-long friendship. Brakishore Babu acquainted me with the facts of the case. He used to be in the habit of taking up the cases of the poor tenants. There were two such cases pending when I went there. When he won any such case, he consoled himself that he was doing something for these poor people. Not that he did not charge fees from these simple peasants. Lawyers labour under the belief that, if they do not charge fees, they will have no wherewithal to run their households, and will not be able to render effective help to the poor people. The figures of the fees they charged and the standard of a barrister's fees in Bengal and Bihar staggered me.

'We gave Rs. 10,000 to so and so for his opinion,' I was told. Nothing less than four figures in any case.

These friends listened to my kindly reproach and did not misunderstand me.

'Having studied these cases,' said I, 'I have come to the conclusion that we should stop going to law courts. Taking such cases to the courts does little good. Where the *ryots* are so crushed and fear stricken, law courts are useless. The real relief for them is to be free from fear. We cannot sit still until we have driven *distress* out of Bihar. I had thought that I should be able to leave here in two days, but I now realize that the work might take even two years. I am prepared to give that time, if necessary. I am now feeling my ground, but I want your help.'

I found Brajkishore Babu exceptionally cool-headed. 'We shall render all the help we can,' he said quietly, 'but pray tell us what kind of help you will need.'

And thus we sat—talking until midnight.

'I shall have little use for your legal knowledge,' I said to them. 'I want clerical assistance and help in interpretation. It may be necessary to face imprisonment, but, much as I would love you to run that risk, you would go only so far as you feel yourselves capable of going. Even turning yourselves into clerks and giving up your profession for an indefinite period is no small thing. I find it difficult to understand the local dialect of *Ahmed*, and I shall not be able to read papers written in *Kaithi* or *Urdu*. I shall want you to translate them for me. We cannot afford to pay for this work. It should all be done for love and out of a spirit of service.'

Brajkishore Babu understood this immediately, and he now cross-examined me and his companions by turns. He tried to ascertain the implications of all that I had said—how long their service would be required, how many of them would be needed, whether they might serve by turns and so on. Then he asked the *satiks* the capacity of their sacrifice.

Ultimately they gave me this assurance. 'Such and such a number of us will do whatever you may ask. Some of us will be with you for so much time as you may require. The idea of accommodating oneself to imprisonment is a novel thing for us. We will try to assimilate it.'

(*Autobiography of Mahatma Gandhi*, pp. 497-500).

### (3) "FACE TO FACE WITH AHIMSA."

My object was to inquire into the condition of the Champaran agriculturists and understand their grievances against the indigo planters. For this purpose it was necessary that I should meet thousands of the *ryots*. But I deemed it essential, before starting on my inquiry, to know the

planters' side of the case and see the Commissioner of the Division. I sought and was granted appointments with both.

The Secretary of the Planters' Association told me plainly that I was an outsider and that I had no business to come between the planters and their tenants, but if I had any representation to make, I might submit it in writing. I politely told him that I did not regard myself as an outsider, and that I had every right to inquire into the condition of the tenants if they desired me to do so.

The Commissioner, on whom I called, proceeded to bully me, and advised me forthwith to leave Tirhut.

I acquainted my co-workers with all this, and told them that there was a likelihood of Government stopping me from proceeding further, and that I might have to go to jail earlier than I had expected, and that, if I was to be arrested, it would be best that the arrest should take place in Motihari or if possible in Bettiah. It was advisable, therefore, that I should go to those places as early as possible.

Champaran is a district of the Tirhut division and Motihari is its headquarters. Rajkumar Shukla's place was in the vicinity of Bettiah, and the tenants belonging to the *latif* in its neighbourhood were the poorest in the district. Rajkumar Shukla wanted me to see them and I was equally anxious to do so.

So I started with my co-workers for Motihari the same day. Baba Gopal Prasad harboured us in his home, which became a caravanserai. It could hardly contain us all. The very same day we heard that about five miles from Motihari a tenant had been ill-treated. It was decided that, in company with Baba Dharanidhar Prasad, I should go and see him the next morning, and we accordingly set off for the place on elephant's back. An elephant, by the way, is about as common in Champaran as a bullock-cart in Gujarat. We had scarcely gone half way when a messenger from the Police Superintendent overtook us and said that the latter had sent his compliments. I saw what he meant. Having left Dharanidhar Babu to proceed to the original destination,

I got into the hired carriage which the messenger had brought. He then served on me a notice to leave Champaran, and drove me to my place. On his asking me to acknowledge the service of the notice, I wrote to the effect that I did not propose to comply with it and leave Champaran till my inquiry was finished. Thereupon I received a summons to take my trial the next day for disobeying the order to leave Champaran.

I kept awake that whole night writing letters and giving necessary instructions to Babu Brajkishore Prasad.

The news of the notice and the summons spread like wild-fire, and I was told that Motihari that day witnessed unprecedented scenes. Gorakhabu's house and the court house overflowed with men. Fortunately I had finished all my work during the night and so was able to cope with the crowds. My companions proved the greatest help. They occupied themselves with regulating the crowds, for the latter followed me wherever I went.

A sort of friendliness sprang up between the officials—Collector, Magistrate, Police Superintendent—and myself. I might have legally resisted the notices served on me. Instead I accepted them all, and my conduct towards the officials was correct. They thus saw that I did not want to offend them personally, but that I wanted to offer civil resistance to their orders. In this way they were put at ease, and instead of harassing me they gladly availed themselves of my and my co-workers' co-operation in regulating the crowds. But it was an ocular demonstration to them of the fact that their authority was shaken. The people had for the moment lost all fear of punishment and yielded obedience to the power of love which their new friend exercised.

It should be remembered that no one knew me in Champaran. The peasants were all ignorant Champaran, being far up north of the Ganges, and right at the foot of the Himalayas in close proximity to Nepal, was cut off from the rest of India. The Congress was practically unknown in those parts. Even those who had heard the name of the Congress shrank from joining it or even mentioning it. And

now the Congress and its members had entered this land, though not in the name of the Congress, yet in a far more real sense.

In consultation with my co-workers I had decided that nothing should be done in the name of the Congress. What we wanted was work and not name, substance and not shadow. For the name of the Congress was the *bellu* *asur* of the Government and their controllers—the planters. To them the Congress was a byword for lawyers' wrangles, evasion of law through legal loopholes, a byword for bomb and anarchical crime and for diplomacy and hypocrisy. We had to disillusion them both. Therefore we had decided not to mention the name of the Congress and not to acquaint the peasants with the organization called the Congress. It was enough, we thought, if they understood and followed the spirit of the Congress instead of its letter.

No emissaries had therefore been sent there, openly or secretly, on behalf of the Congress to prepare the ground for our arrival. Rajkumar Shukla was incapable of reaching the thousands of peasants. No political work had yet been done amongst them. The world outside Champaran was not known to them. And yet they received me as though we had been age-long friends. It is no exaggeration, but the literal truth, to say that in this meeting with the peasants I was face to face with God, *Atma* and Truth.

When I come to examine my title to this realization, I find nothing but my love for the people. And this in turn is nothing but an expression of my unshakable faith in *Atma*. That day in Champaran was an unforgettable event in my life and a red-letter day for the peasants and for me.

According to the law, I was to be on my trial, but truly speaking Government was to be on its trial. The Commissioner only succeeded in trapping Government in the net which he had spread for me."

(*Autobiography of Mahatma Gandhi*,  
pp. 501-04).

## (4) "CASE WITHDRAWN"

The trial began. The Government pleader, the Magistrate and other officials were on tenterhooks. They were at a loss to know what to do. The Government pleader was pressing the Magistrate to postpone the case. But I interfered and requested the Magistrate not to postpone the case, as I wanted to plead guilty to having disobeyed the order to leave Champaran and read a brief statement (dated 18th April, 1917) as follows:

'With the permission of the Court I would like to make a brief statement showing why I have taken the very serious step of seemingly disobeying the order passed under Sec. 144 of Cr. P.C. In my humble opinion it is a question of difference of opinion between the Local Administration and myself. I have entered the country with motives of rendering humanitarian and national service. I have done so in response to a pressing invitation to come and help the *yeats*, who urge they are not being fairly treated by the indigo planters. I could not render any help without studying the problem. I have, therefore, come to study it with the assistance, if possible, of the Administration and the planters. I have no other motive, and cannot believe that my coming can in any way disturb public peace and cause loss of life. I claim to have considerable experience in such matters. The Administration, however, have thought differently. I fully appreciate their difficulty, and I admit too that they can only proceed upon information they received. As a law-abiding citizen my first instinct would be, as it was, to obey the order served upon me. But I could not do so without doing violence to my sense of duty to those for whom I have come. I feel that I could just now serve them only by remaining in their midst. I could not, therefore, voluntarily retire. Amid this conflict of duties I could only throw the responsibility of removing me from them on the Administration. I am fully conscious of the fact that a person, holding, in the public life of India, a position such as I do, has to be most careful in setting an example. It is my firm belief that in the complex constitution under which we are living, the only safe and honourable course for a self-respecting man is, in



the circumstances such as face me, to do what I have decided to do, that is to submit without protest to the penalty of disobedience.

"I venture to make this statement not in any way in extenuation of the penalty to be awarded against me, but to show that I have disregarded the order served upon me not for want of respect for lawful authority, but in obedience to the higher law of our being, the voice of conscience."

There was now no occasion to postpone the hearing, but as both the Magistrate and the Government pleader had been taken by surprise, the Magistrate postponed judgment. Meanwhile I had wired full details to the Viceroy, to Patna friends, as also to Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya and others.

Before I could appear before the Court to receive the sentence, the Magistrate sent a written message that the Lieutenant Governor had ordered the case against me to me be withdrawn and the Collector wrote to me saying that I was at liberty to conduct the proposed inquiry, and that I might count on whatever help I needed from the officials. None of us was prepared for this prompt and happy issue.

I called on the Collector Mr. Heycock. He seemed to be a good man, anxious to do justice. He told me that I might ask for whatever papers I desired to see, and that I was at liberty to see him whenever I liked.

The country thus had its first direct object-lesson in Civil Disobedience. The affair was freely discussed both locally and in the press, and my inquiry got unexpected publicity.

It was necessary for my inquiry that the Government should remain neutral. But the inquiry did not need support from press reporters or leading articles in the press. Indeed the situation in Champaran was so delicate and difficult that over-energetic criticism or highly coloured reports might easily damage the cause which I was seeking to espouse.

So I wrote to the editors of the principal papers requesting them not to trouble to send any reporters, as I should send them whatever might be necessary for publication and keep them informed.

I knew that the Government attitude countenancing my presence had displeased the Champaran planters, and I knew that even the officials, though they could say nothing openly, could hardly have liked it. Incorrect or misleading reports, therefore, were likely to incense them all the more, and their ire, instead of descending on me, would be sure to descend on the poor fear-stricken ryots and seriously hinder my search for the truth about the case.

In spite of these precautions the planters engineered against me a poisonous agitation. All sorts of falsehoods appeared in the press about my co-workers and myself. But my extreme cautiousness and my insistence on truth, even to the minutest detail, turned the edge of their sword.

The planters left no stone unturned in maligning Braj-kishore Babu, but the more they maligned him, the more he rose in the estimation of the people.

In such a delicate situation as this I did not think it proper to invite any leaders from other provinces.

Pandit Malaviyaji had sent me an assurance that whenever I wanted him, I had only to send him word, but I did not trouble him. I thus prevented the struggle from assuming a political aspect. But I sent to the leaders and the principal papers occasional reports, not for publication, but merely for their information. I had seen that, even where the end might be political, but where the cause was non-political, one damaged it by giving it a political aspect and helped it by keeping it within its non-political limit. The Champaran struggle was a proof of the fact that disinterested service of the people in any sphere ultimately helps the country politically.<sup>17</sup>

*(Autobiography of Mahatma Gandhi  
pp. 505-08).*

## (5) "METHODS OF WORK

To give a full account of the Champaran inquiry would be to narrate the history, for the period, of the Champaran *ryot*, which is out of the question in these chapters. The Champaran inquiry was a bold experiment with *Truth and Adress*, and I am giving week by week only what occurs to me as worth giving from that point of view. For more details the reader must turn to Sjt. Rajendra Prasad's history of the *Champaran Satyagraha* in Hindi, of which, I am told, an English edition<sup>1</sup> is now in the press.

But to return to the subject matter of this chapter. The inquiry could not be conducted in Gorakhababu's house, without practically asking poor Gorakhababu to vacate it. And the people of Motihari had not yet shed their fear to the extent of renting a house to us. However, Brajkishorebabu tactfully secured one with considerable open space about it and we now removed there.

It was not quite possible to carry on the work without money. It had not been the practice hitherto to appeal to the public for money for work of this kind. Brajkishorebabu and his friends were mainly *Fakirs* who either contributed funds themselves, or found it from friends whenever there was an occasion. How could they ask the people to pay when they and their kind could well afford to do so? That seemed to be the argument. I had made up my mind not to accept anything from the Champaran *ryot*. It would be bound to be misinterpreted. I was equally determined not to appeal to the country at large for funds to conduct this inquiry. For that was likely to give it an all India and political aspect. Friends from Bombay offered Rs. 15,000, but I declined the offer with thanks. I decided to get as much as was possible, with Brajkishorebabu's help, from well-to-do Biharis living outside Champaran and, if more was needed, to approach my friend Dr. P. J. Mehta of Rangoon. Dr. Mehta readily agreed to send me whatever might be needed. We were thus free from all anxiety on this score. We were not

1. The English edition came out later.

likely to require large funds, as we were bent on exercising the greatest economy in consonance with the poverty of Champaran. Indeed it was found in the end that we did not need any large amount. I have an impression that we expended in all not more than three thousand rupees, and, as far as I remember, we saved a few hundred rupees from what we had collected.

The curious ways of living of my companions in the early days were a constant theme of raillery at their expense. Each of the *Vokur* had a servant and a cook, and therefore a separate kitchen, and they often had their dinner as late as midnight. Though they paid their own expenses, their irregularity worried me, but as we had become close friends there was no possibility of a misunderstanding between us, and they received my ridicule in good part. Ultimately it was agreed that the servants should be dispensed with, that all the kitchens should be amalgamated, and that regular hours should be observed. As all were not vegetarians, and as two kitchens would have been expensive, a common vegetarian kitchen was decided upon. It was also felt necessary to insist on simple meals.

These arrangements considerably reduced the expenses and saved us a lot of time and energy, and both these were badly needed. Crowds of peasants came to make their statements, and they were followed by an army of companions who filled the compound and garden to overflowing. The efforts of my companions to save me from *darsan*-seekers were often of no avail, and I had to be exhibited for *darsan* at particular hours. At least five to seven volunteers were required to take down statements, and even then some people had to go away in the evening without being able to make their statements. All these statements were not essential, many of them being repetitions, but the people could not be satisfied otherwise, and I appreciated their feeling in the matter.

Those who took down the statements had to observe certain rules. Each peasant had to be closely cross-examined, and whoever failed to satisfy the test was rejected. This

entailed a lot of extra time but most of the statements were thus rendered incontrovertible.

An officer from the C.I.D. would always be present when these statements were recorded. We might have prevented him, but we had decided from the very beginning not only not to mind the presence of C.I.D. officers, but to treat them with courtesy and to give them all the information that it was possible to give them. This was far from doing us any harm. On the contrary the very fact that the statements were taken down in the presence of the C.I.D. officers made the peasants more fearless. Whilst on the one hand excessive fear of the C.I.D. was driven out of the peasants' minds, on the other, their presence exercised a natural restraint on exaggeration. It was the business of C.I.D. friends to entrap people and so the peasants had necessarily to be cautious.

As I did not want to irritate the planters, but to win them over by gentleness, I made a point of writing to and meeting such of them against whom allegations of a serious nature were made. I met the *Planters' Association* as well, placed the *ryots'* grievances before them and acquainted myself with their point of view. Some of the planters hated me, some were indifferent, and a few treated me with courtesy."

(*Autobiography of Mahatma Gandhi*, pp. 509-11).

#### (6) "COMPANIONS

Brājkishorebābū and Rajendrabābū were a matchless pair. Their devotion made it impossible for me to take a single step without their help. Their disciples or their companions—Shambhūbābū, Anugrahābābū, Dharamibābū, Ramnāvanibābū and other *sahās*—were always with us. Vinodhyābābū and Janakdharibābū also came and helped us now and then. All these were Biharis. Their principal work was to take down the *ryots'* statements.

Professor Kṛipalānī could not but cast in his lot with us. Though a Sindhī, he was more Bihari than a born Bihari. I have seen only a few workers capable of merging

themselves in the province of their adoption. Kripalani is one of those few. He made it impossible for anyone to feel that he belonged to a different province. He was my gatekeeper-in-chief. For the time being he made it the end and aim of his life to save me from *darshan*-seekers. He warded off people, calling to his aid now his unfailing humour, now his non-violent threats. At nightfall he would take up his occupation of a teacher and regale his companions with his historical studies and observations, and quicken any timid visitor into bravery.

Maulana Mazharul Haq had registered his name on the standing list of helpers whom I might count upon whenever necessary, and he made a point of looking in once or twice a month. The pomp and splendour in which he then lived was in sharp contrast to his simple life of today. The way in which he associated with us made us feel that he was one of us, though his fashionable habit gave a stranger a different impression.

As I gained more experience of Bihar, I became convinced that work of a permanent nature was impossible without proper village education. The *ryots'* ignorance was pathetic. They either allowed their children to roam about, or made them toil on indigo plantations from morning to night for a couple of coppers a day. In those days a male labourer's wage did not exceed ten pice, a female's did not exceed six, and a child's three. He who succeeded in earning four annas a day was considered most fortunate.

In consultation with my companions I decided to open primary schools in six villages. One of our conditions with the villagers was that they should provide the teachers with board and lodging while we would see to the other expenses. The village folk had hardly any cash in their hands, but they could well afford to provide foodstuffs. Indeed they had already expressed their readiness to contribute grain and other raw materials.

From where to get the teachers was a great problem. It was difficult to find local teachers who would work for a bare allowance or without remuneration. My idea was

never to entrust children to commonplace teachers. Their literary qualification was not so essential as their moral fibre.

So I issued a public appeal for voluntary teachers. It received a ready response. Sjt. Gangadharrao Deshpande sent Babasaheb Soman and Pundalik. Shrimati Abantikabai Gokhale came from Bombay and Mrs. Anandibai Balshampayan from Poona. I sent to the Ashram for Chhotalal, Surendranath and my son Devdas. About this time Mahadev Desai and Narahari Parikh with their wives cast in their lot with me. Kasturbai was also summoned for the work. This was a fairly strong contingent. Shrimati Avantikabai and Shrimati Anandibai were educated enough, but Shrimati Durga Desai and Shrimati Manibehn Parikh had nothing more than a bare knowledge of Gujarati, and Kasturbai not even that. How were these ladies to instruct the children in Hindi?

I explained to them that they were expected to teach the children not grammar and the three R's so much as cleanliness and good manners. I further explained that even as regards letters there was not so great a difference between Gujarati, Hindi and Marathi as they imagined, and in the primary classes, at any rate, the teaching of the rudiments of the alphabet and numerals was not a difficult matter. The result was that the classes taken by these ladies were found to be most successful. The experience inspired them with confidence and interest in their work. Avantikabai's became a model school. She threw herself heart and soul into her work. She brought her exceptional gifts to bear on it. Through these ladies we could, to some extent, reach the village women.

But I did not want to stop at providing for primary education. The villages were insanitary, the lanes full of filth, the wells surrounded by mud and stink and the courtyards unbearably untidy. The elder people badly needed education in cleanliness. They were all suffering from various skin diseases. So it was decided to do as much sanitary work as possible and to penetrate every department of their lives.

Doctors were needed for this work. I requested the Servants of India Society to lend us the services of the late Dr. Dev. We had been great friends, and he readily offered his services for six months. The teachers—men and women—had all to work under him.

All of them had express instructions not to concern themselves with grievances against planters or with politics. People who had any complaints to make were to be referred to me. No one was to venture out of his beat. The friends carried out these instructions with wonderful fidelity. I do not remember a single occasion of indiscipline."

*(Autobiography of Mahatma Gandhi, pp. 512-14).*

#### (7) "PENETRATING THE VILLAGES"

As far as was possible we placed each school in charge of one man and one woman. These volunteers had to look after medical relief and sanitation. The womenfolk had to be approached through women.

Medical relief was a very simple affair. Castor oil, quinine and sulphur ointment were the only drugs provided to the volunteers. If the patient showed a furred tongue or complained of constipation, castor oil was administered, in case of fever quinine was given after an opening dose of castor oil, and the sulphur ointment was applied in case of boils and itch after thoroughly washing the affected parts. No patient was permitted to take home any medicine. Wherever there was some complication Dr. Dev. was consulted. Dr. Dev. used to visit each centre on certain fixed days in the week.

Quite a number of people availed themselves of this simple relief. This plan of work will not seem strange when it is remembered that the prevailing ailments were few and amenable to simple treatment, by no means requiring expert help. As for the people the arrangement answered excellently.



Sanitation was a difficult affair. The people were not prepared to do anything themselves. Even the field labourers were not ready to do their own scavenging. But Dr. Dev. was not a man easily to lose heart. He and the volunteers concentrated their energies on making a village ideally clean. They swept the roads and the courtyards, cleaned out the wells, filled up the pools near by, and lovingly persuaded the villagers to raise volunteers from amongst themselves. In some villages they shamed people into taking up the work, and in others the people were so enthusiastic that they even prepared roads to enable my car to go from place to place. These sweet experiences were not unmingled with bitter ones of people's apathy. I remember some villagers frankly expressing their dislike for this work.

It may not be out of place here to narrate an experience that I have described before now at many meetings. Bhitiharva was a small village in which was one of our schools. I happened to visit a smaller village in its vicinity and found some of the women dressed very dirtily. So I told my wife to ask them why they did not wash their clothes. She spoke to them. One of the women took her into her hut and said: 'Look now, there is no box or cupboard here containing other clothes. The *sari* I am wearing is the only one I have. How am I to wash it? Tell *Mahataaji* to get me another *sari*, and I shall then promise to bathe and put on clean clothes every day.'

This cottage was not an exception, but a type to be found in many Indian villages. In countless cottages in India people live without any furniture and without a change of clothes, merely with a rag to cover their shame.

One more experience I will note. In Champaran there is no lack of bamboo and grass. The school hut they had put up at Bhitiharva was made of these materials. Someone—possibly some of the neighbouring planters' men—set fire to it one night. It was not thought advisable to build another hut of bamboo and grass. The school was in charge of Sjt. Soman and Karturba. Sjt. Soman decided to build a *patla* house and thanks to his infectious labour many co-operated with

him, and a brick house was soon made ready. There was no fear now of this building being burnt down.

Thus the volunteers with their schools, sanitation work and medical relief gained the confidence and respect of the village folk, and were able to bring good influence to bear upon them.

But I must confess with regret that my hope of putting this constructive work on a permanent footing was not fulfilled. The volunteers had come for temporary periods, I could not secure any more from outside, and permanent honorary workers from Bihar were not available. As soon as my work in Champaran was finished, work outside, which had been preparing in the meantime, drew me away. The few months' work in Champaran, however, took such deep root that its influence in one form or another is to be observed there even today."

*(Autobiography of Mahatma Gandhi,  
pp. 515-17).*

#### (8) "WHEN A GOVERNOR IS GOOD

Whilst on the one hand social service work of the kind I have described in the foregoing chapters was being carried out, on the other the work of recording statements of the *ryots'* grievances was progressing apace. Thousands of such statements were taken, and they could not but have their effect. The ever growing number of *ryats* coming to make their statements increased the planters' wrath, and they moved heaven and earth to counteract my inquiry.

One day I received a letter from the Bihar Government to the following effect: 'Your inquiry has been sufficiently prolonged; should you not now bring it to an end and leave Bihar?' The letter was couched in polite language, but its meaning was obvious.

I wrote in reply that the inquiry was bound to be prolonged, and unless and until it resulted in bringing relief to the people, I had no intention of leaving Bihar. I pointed out that it was open to Government to terminate my in-

quiry by accepting the *ryots'* grievances as genuine and redressing them, or by recognizing that the *ryots* had made out a *prima facie* case for an official inquiry which should be immediately instituted.

Sir Edward Gait, the Lieutenant Governor, asked me to see him, expressed his willingness to appoint an inquiry and invited me to be a member of the Committee. I ascertained the names of the other members, and after consultation with my co-workers agreed to serve on the Committee, on condition that I should be free to confer with my co-workers during the progress of the inquiry, that Government should recognize that, by being a member of the Committee, I did not cease to be the *ryots'* advocate, and that in case the result of the inquiry failed to give me satisfaction, I should be free to guide and advise the *ryots* as to what line of action they should take.

Sir Edward Gait accepted the condition as just and proper and announced the inquiry. The late Sir Frank Sly was appointed Chairman of the Committee.

The Committee found in favour of the *ryots*, and recommended that the planters should refund a portion of the exactions made by them which the Committee had found to be unlawful, and that the *disthahi* system should be abolished by law.

Sir Edward Gait had a large share in getting the Committee to make a unanimous report and in getting the agrarian bill passed in accordance with the Committee's recommendations. Had he not adopted a firm attitude, and had he not brought all his tact to bear on the subject, the report would not have been unanimous, and the Agrarian Act would not have been passed. The planters wielded extraordinary power. They offered strenuous opposition to the bill in spite of the report, but Sir Edward Gait remained firm up to the last and fully carried out the recommendations of the Committee.

The *disthahi* system which had been in existence for about a century was thus abolished, and with it the planters'

my came to an end. The gate, who had all along remained crushed, now somewhat came to their own, and the superstition that the stain of indigo could never be washed out was exploded.

It was my desire to continue the constructive work for some years, to establish more schools and to penetrate the villages more effectively. The ground had been prepared, but it did not please God, as often before, to allow my plans to be fulfilled. Fate decided otherwise and drove me to take up work elsewhere."

*(Autobiography of Mahatma Gandhi, pp. 518-19).*

(9) "With reference to the order under section 144 of the Criminal Procedure Code just served upon me, I beg to state that I am sorry that you have felt called upon to issue it and I am sorry too that the Commissioner of the Division has totally misinterpreted my position. Out of a sense of public responsibility, I feel it to be my duty to say that I am unable to leave this district but if it so pleases the authorities, I shall submit to the order, viz. suffering the penalty of disobedience.

I must emphatically repudiate the Commissioner's suggestion that my object is likely to be agitation. My desire is purely and simply for a genuine search for knowledge. And thus I shall continue to satisfy so long as I am left free." *(Letter, dated 16th April, 1917, written by Mahatma Gandhi from Malabar to Mr. W.B. Heycock, District Magistrate, Champaran).*

(10) "As I have no desire to do anything without the knowledge of the authorities, I beg to inform you that assuming there is no service of summons for appearance before the court tomorrow, I am going to Shirampur and the surrounding villages tomorrow morning. The party hopes to start about 3 A.M.

I observed yesterday that a police officer followed the party all the way. I may state that we court the fullest publicity and therefore beg on my own behalf and that of

my colleagues to say that we shall welcome the presence, if we may not have the assistance, of the police in the course of our mission." (*Letter, dated 17th April, 1917, written by Mahatma Gandhi to Mr. W.B. Heycock.*)

(11) "In reply to your note of even date, I beg to state that I shall gladly remain in Motihari tomorrow and await summons" (*Letter, dated 17th April, 1917, written by Mahatma Gandhi from Motihari to the District Magistrate, Motihari.*)

(11a) "Will you please tell me where I have to wait on you tomorrow? I forgot to ask you when you gave me the appointment" (*Letter, dated 20th April, 1917, written by Mahatma Gandhi from Motihari to Mr. W.B. Heycock.*)

(11b) "I thank you for your kind note of yesterday. I am writing to Mr. Cox today. I leave for Bettiah this afternoon" (*Letter, dated 22nd April, 1917, written by Mahatma Gandhi from Motihari to Mr. W.B. Heycock.*)

(12) "I have your note of even date. I thank you for having sent me your letter to Mr. Heycock for perusal. I appreciate the frankness that pervades it, and it is on the whole a very fair summary of what has happened between us.

As to the guns, I think you are somewhat unnecessarily offended. I mentioned the matter to you on Mr. Heycock's suggestion, and if you admit the propriety of my having spoken to you about the matter, I could not be blamed for having told the aggrieved parties that there was a probability of their getting back their guns. This, if anything was done to create a good impression about yourself, an impression which, I am happy to say, I carried with me when I first met you and which I have had no reason to change since. There was certainly no interference on my part with your authority.

I venture to think that your deduction too that in the estimation of the rajpoot I am superseding local authority is hardly warranted by facts. My mission is to invoke the help of local authority in their aid, and to stimulate its interest in them more fully than heretofore.

I anticipate no trouble because I always make it a point to seek an interview with the planters wherever I go to tell the people that relief is to come not from me, but from the planters and the Government, and that they are in no case to use violence or stop work, but continue it as before as if there was no enquiry being made by me and also because the enquiry is absolutely open and attended by representatives.

You are less than fair to B. Braja Kishore Prasad.<sup>1</sup> Together with other friends from Bihar he is helping me very materially. In this enquiry he has no status apart from me; hence he and the other friends have not called on you. But I must state that their assistance has been of the greatest value to me.

Perhaps it is but fair to the planters to say that Mr. Stiff<sup>2</sup> has of his own motion invited me to visit his *dhat* and remain there as long as I like and that Mr. Cox has written to me saying that he is arranging a meeting with some leading planters and concludes 'you may be sure that we wish to assist you in your enquiry.' This perhaps is in conflict with your statement 'By the planters he is regarded with great suspicion as their natural enemy.'

I wish to serve my countrymen and the planters through the Government where their assistance is necessary" (*Letter, dated 28th April, 1917, written by Mahatma Gandhi to Mr. W. H. Lewis, Subdivisional Magistrate of Bettiah*).

(13) "I came to Motihari last night. You may be aware that I am to meet the planters this morning at 10.45. You will please let me know if you want me (*Letter dated 2nd May, 1917, written by Mahatma Gandhi from Motihari to Mr. W.B. Heycock*).

1. "I replied very briefly to points raised by Mr. Gandhi. Babu Brij Kishore who stands in rather a different position to Mr. Gandhi's other supporters is arranging to come and see me".....W.H.L.

2. C. Stiff of Sethi indigo concern.

(14) "In accordance with the suggestion made by Hon'ble Mr. Maude' I beg to submit herewith the preliminary conclusions which I have arrived at as a result of the inquiry being made by me into the agrarian condition of the *rajats* of Champaran.

At the outset I would like to state that it was not possible for me to give the assurance which Mr. Maude would have liked me to have given viz., that the *Fakel* friends who have been assisting me would be withdrawn. I must confess that this request has hurt me deeply. It has been made ever since my arrival here. I have been told, i.e., after the withdrawal of the order of removal from the District, that my presence was harmless enough and that my bonafides were unquestioned but that the presence of the *Fakel* friends was likely to create 'a dangerous situation.' I venture to submit that if I may be trusted to conduct myself decorously I may be equally trusted to choose helpers of the same type as myself. I consider it a privilege to have the association in the difficult task before me, of these able, earnest and honourable men. It seems to me that for me to abandon them is to abandon my work. It must be a point of honour with me not to dispense with their help until anything unworthy is proved against them to my satisfaction. I do not share the fear that either my presence or that of my friends can create 'a dangerous situation.' The danger, if any exists, must lie in the causes that have brought about strained relations between the planters and the *rajats*. And if the causes were removed, there never need be any fear of a 'dangerous situation' arising in Champaran so far as the *rajats* are concerned.

Coming to the immediate purpose of this representation I beg to state that nearly four thousand *rajats* have been examined and their statements taken after careful cross examination. Several villages have been visited and many judgements of courts studied. And the inquiry is in my opinion capable of sustaining the following conclusions.

1. Hon'ble Mr. W. Maude, Member and Vice President of the Executive Council, Bihar and Orissa.

Factories or concerns in the District of Champaran may be divided into two classes—

- (1) Those that have never had indigo plantations and
- (2) those that have.

(1) The concerns which have never grown indigo have exacted *abwaj* known by various local names equal in amount at least to the rents paid by the *rayats*. This exaction although it has been held to be illegal has not altogether stopped.

(2) The indigo-growing factories have grown indigo either under the *Tinkathia* system or *Khasa*. The former has been most prevalent and has caused the greatest hardship. The type has varied with the progress of time. Starting with indigo it has taken in its sweep all kinds of crops. It may now be defined as an obligation presumed to attach to the *rayat's* holding whereby the *raja* has to grow a crop on 3/20 of the holding at the will of the landlord for a stated consideration. There appears to be no legal warrant for it. The *rayats* have always fought against it and have only yielded to force. They have not received adequate consideration for the services. When, however, owing to the introduction of synthetic indigo the price of the local product fell, the planters desired to cancel the indigo *catta*. They therefore devised a means of saddling the losses upon the *rayats*. In lease-hold lands they made the *rayats* pay *Taxan* i.e. damages, to the extent of Rs. 100/- per *bigha* in consideration of their waiving their right to indigo cultivation. This, the *rayats* claim was done under coercion. Where the *rayats* could not find cash, hand-notes and mortgage bonds were made for payment in instalments bearing interest at 12 per cent per annum. In these, the balance due has not been described as *Taxan*, i.e., damages, but it has been fictitiously treated as an advance to the *raja* for some purpose of his own.

In *makarrani* lands the damage has taken the shape of *sharab-badi* *raita* meaning enhancement of rent in lieu of indigo cultivation. The enhancement according to the survey report has in the case of 5955 tenancies amounted to Rs. 31,062, the pre-enhancement figure being Rs. 53,865. The total







*Mahatma Gandhi in Champaran in 1917.*

number of tenancies affected is much larger. The *rajats* claim that these *satias* were taken from them under coercion. It is inconceivable that the *rajats* would agree to an enormous perpetual increase in their rents against freedom from liability to grow indigo for a temporary period, which freedom they were strenuously fighting to secure and hourly expecting.

Where *taxen* has not been exacted, the factories have forced the *rajats* to grow oats, sugarcane, or such other crops under the *Tinkathia* system.

Under the *Tinkathia* system the *rajat* has been obliged to give his best land for the landlord's crops; in some cases the land in front of his house has been so used; he has been obliged to give his best time and energy also to it so that very little time has been left to him for growing his own crops—his means of livelihood.

Cart-hire *satias* have been forcibly taken from the *rajats* for supplying carts to the factories on hire insufficient even to cover the actual outlay.

Inadequate wages have been paid to the *rajats* whose labour has been impressed and even boys of tender age have been made to work against their will.

Ploughs of the *rajats* have been impressed and detained by the factories for days together for ploughing factory lands for a trifling consideration and at a time when they have required them for cultivating their own lands.

*Dastari* has been taken by the notoriously ill-paid factory *amlas* (officers) out of the wages received by the labourers often amounting to a fifth of their daily wage, and also out of the hire paid for carts and ploughs.

In some villages the *Chamars* (shoemakers) have been forced to give up to the factories the hides of dead cattle belonging to the *rajats*. Against the carcasses the *Chamars* used to supply the *rajats* with shoes and leather straps for ploughs and their women used to render services to the latter's families at child-birth. Now they have ceased to

render these valuable services. Some factories have for the collection of such hides opened hides godowns.

Illegal fines—often of heavy amounts—have been imposed by the factories upon *rajats* who have proved unbending.

Among the other (according to the evidence before me) methods adopted to bend the *rajats* to their will, the planters have impounded the *rajats'* cattle, posted peons on their houses, withdrawn from them barbers', *Dhobis'* (washermen) carpenters', and smiths' services, have prevented the use of village wells and pasture lands by ploughing up the pathways and lands just in front of or behind their homesteads, have brought or promoted civil suits, or criminal complaints against them, and resorted to actual physical force and wrongful confinements. The planters have successfully used the institutions of the country to enforce their will against the *rajats* and have not hesitated to supplement them by taking the law in their own hands. The result has been that the *rajats* have shown an abject helplessness, such as I have not witnessed in any part of India where I have travelled.

They are members of District Boards and Associates under the *Chambers Act* and keepers of pounds. Their position as such has been felt by the *rajats*. The roads which the latter pay for at the rate of half an anna per rupee of rent paid by them are hardly available to them. Their carts and bullocks which perhaps most need the roads are rarely allowed to make use of them. That this is not peculiar to Champaran does not in any way mitigate the grievance.

I am aware that there are concerns which form exceptions to the rule laid down but as a general charge the statements made above are capable of proof.

I am aware, too, that there are some Indian *Zamindars* who are open to the charges made above. Relief is sought for in their cases as in those of the planters. Whilst there can be no doubt that the latter have inherited a vicious system, they with their trained minds and superior position have reduced it to an exact science, so that the *rajats* would not only have been unable to raise their heads above water

but would have sunk deeper still had not the Government granted some protection. But that protection has been meagre and provokingly slow and has often come too late to be appreciated by the *rajats*.

It is true that the Government await the Settlement Officer's Report on some of the matters covered by this representation. It is submitted that when the *rajats* are groaning under the weight of oppression, such as I have described above, an inquiry by the Settlement Officer is a cumbersome method. With him the grievances mentioned herein are but an item in an extensive settlement operation. Nor does his inquiry cover all the points raised above. Moreover grievances have been set forth herein which are not likely to be disputed. And they are so serious as to require immediate relief.

That *Taxen* and *Sherat-beti* *setar* and *abwads* have been exacted cannot be questioned. I hope it will not be argued that the *rajats* can be fully protected as to these by recourse to law. It is submitted that where there is wholesale exaction, courts are not sufficient protection for the *rajats* and the administrative protection of the *Sikar* as the supreme landlord is an absolute necessity.

The wrongs are twofold. There are wrongs which are accomplished facts and wrongs which continue. The continuing wrongs need to be stopped at once and a small inquiry may be made as to past wrongs, such as, damages and *abwads* already taken and *Sherat-beti* payments already made. The *rajats* should be told by proclamation and notices distributed broad-cast among them that they are not only not bound to pay *abwads*, *Taxen* and *Sherat-beti* charges but that they ought not to pay them, that the *Sikar* will protect them if any attempt is made to enforce payment thereof. They should further be informed that they are not bound to render any personal service to their landlords and that they are free to sell their services wherever they choose and that they are not bound to grow indigo, sugarcane or any other crop unless they wish to do so and unless it is profitable for them. The Bettiah Raj leases given to the

factories should not be renewed until the wrongs are remedied and should, when renewed, properly safeguard the *rajats*' rights.

As to *Dastari*, it is clear that better paid and educated men should substitute the present holders of responsible officers and that no countenance should be given to the diminution in *rajats*' wages by illegal exaction of *Dastari*. I feel sure that the planters are quite capable of dealing with the evil although it is in their language 'as old as the Himalayas'.

The *rajats* being secured in their freedom, it would be no longer necessary to investigate the question of the inadequacy or otherwise of the consideration in the indigo *sattas* and cart-hire *sattas*, and the wages. The *rajats* by common agreement should be advised to finish indigo or other crops for the current year. But thenceforth whether it is indigo or any other crop, it should be only under a system of absolute freewill.

It will be observed that I have burdened this statement with as little argument as possible. But if it is the desire of the Government that I should prove any of my conclusions I shall be pleased to tender the proofs on which they are based.

In conclusion I would like to state that I have no desire to hurt the planters' feelings. I have received every courtesy from them. Believing as I do that the *rajats* are labouring under a grievous wrong from which they ought to be freed immediately, I have dealt, as calmly as is possible for me to do so, with the system which the planters are working. I have entered upon my mission in the hope that they as Englishmen born to enjoy the fullest personal liberty and freedom will not fail to rise to their status and will not be grudging the *rajats* the same measure of liberty and freedom.

I am sending copies to the Commissioner of the Tirhut Division, the Collector of Champaran, the Subdivisional officer of Bettiah, the Manager of the Bettiah Raj, the Secretaries respectively of the Bihar Planters' Association and

the District Planters' Association, I am circulating them also among those leaders of public opinion in the country who have kept themselves in touch with the work being done by my colleagues and myself. (*Report sent by Mahatma Gandhi from Bettiah to the Chief Secretary, Bihar and Orissa, on the 13th May, 1917*).

(15) I beg to send you for your information a copy of my representation to the Government (*Letter, dated 14th May, 1917, written by Mahatma Gandhi from Motihari to Mr. W.B. Hyndes*).

(15a) "The copies are being marked 'not for publication,' as there is no desire to invite a public discussion of the question unless it becomes absolutely necessary

I need hardly give the assurance that I am at the disposal of the Government whenever my presence may be required."

(*Letter, dated the 12th May, 1917, written by Mahatma Gandhi from Bettiah to the Chief Secretary to Government of Bihar and Orissa*).

(16) "Bustai Sahu Halwai, Gulli Sahu Kanu, and Bhardul Thakore Badai of Raxaul Bazar have shown me receipts they hold for lands leased by them from you. They say that their houses are burnt down and that they are now being prevented from rebuilding and are being asked to vacate the lands in their possession. Will you kindly let me know whether there is any truth in the above statements and if so why they are being prevented from rebuilding?"

(*Letter, dated the 17th May, 1917, written by Mahatma Gandhi from Bettiah to Mr. J. P. Edwards, Manager of Hindaya Kothi, Champaran*).

(17) "Thank you for your letter of the 20th instant. I have told the men the contents of your letter."

(*Letter, dated 21st May, 1917, written by Mahatma Gandhi from Bettiah to Mr. J. P. Edwards*).

(18) "I thank you for having come to Sarikawa and having sent your carriage.

After you and Mr. Lewis had withdrawn, I sat with the people who must have numbered over 500 and talked to them. I told them that you wanted to do justice, that you were ready to take back the *zawat* land and that you considered that it was more profitable to you to get it back. I told them too that in your opinion the people had taken the *zawat* land from your predecessor not only willingly but most eagerly, that it was given to the *zyet* not in lieu of indigo cultivation but that it was given in order to relieve the *zyet* from liability to supply labour to the landlord. I further told them that you had shown me Mr. Barclay's letter to Mr. Gourlay confirming the view and finally told them whilst on this point that if they returned the *zawat* land you expected them to grow indigo again as before up to the termination of the period of their contracts, and I assured them that I would plead with you that it would be quite unfair to ask the *zyet* to revert to indigo growing (for reasons to be presently stated). I then invited those who wanted to abandon the *zawat* at once, although they had paid for the full agricultural year. As a result over 175 gave in their names there and then and men have been streaming in during the two days. The total has reached nearly 500 up to the time of writing. I enclose herewith a list of the names.

In going through the *Khatwas*, the receipts and the amounts charged against the *zawat* land I find on 70 tenancies that on an average the *zyet* are paying you Rs. 24-5-3 for every *bigha* and the smallest is Rs. 7-8-0 per *bigha*. Incidentally I observe that whilst 27 *bighas* of *kashi* land pay Rs. 59-13-6, in the vast majority of cases the *zyet* hold less than one *bigha* of *zawat* land. The rate fixed varies with the extent of their *kashi* holding and not with the quality of the *zawat*. And they are paying as much as Rs. 1-8-0 per *bigha* of *kashi* land in addition to from six annas to twelve annas per *katha* of *zawat*. And the *kathas* of *zawat* seem to vary with the *bighas* of *kashi* and in no case amounting to more

1. Mr. J. Barclay was proprietor of the indigo concern of which Mr. Holman was the Manager.



than three *katha* per *bigha*. The average worked out for fifty villagers comes to one and a half *katha* per *bigha*. This in my opinion hardly bears out Mr. Barclay's contention. It rather bears out the *ryots'* contention that the settlement of *zamt* is another form of *satathia* and was designed to cover the losses suffered by the concern when the price of indigo fell. The *ryots* insist that pressure was effectively put upon them to take *zamt* land. Their contention seems to be borne out by the readiness with which they have come forward to surrender it. For the last ten years the *ryots* have been paying what according to the above view amounts to *taxes* for not growing indigo. And the concern has received on that account an average of more than Rs. 100 per *bigha* of *satathia*. In the circumstances and regard being had to the fact that you believe it to be advantageous for you to receive back the *zamt* land, I hope you will not press for reversion to indigo growing.

I notice that in some cases damages have been settled on *kathas* taken out of the *kathi* land of the *ryots*. I venture to think that, if you would see your way to accept my suggestion, take back the *zamt* and forgo the future damage whether tacked on to the *zamt* or to the *kathi* land, one of the sorest points of dispute between the concern and the would *ryots* be amicably settled and you will have set an example which would be advantageously followed by other planters.

In describing the process adopted by the concern for *ryots* recovering losses on indigo from the *ryots*, I have hitherto confined myself to your *satathia* land. On *thiwa* land you seem to have accepted the system followed elsewhere. You have taken hand-notes for the balance of *taxes* payable by the *ryots* bearing a heavy rate of interest. I suggest that the outstanding hand-notes may be cancelled. The *ryots* for the sake of peace and compromise should say nothing as to refund either on the *kathas* above referred to or the *taxes* already collected and of which the hand-notes represent the balance.

As to the *fines*, I must confess that there is overwhelming evidence to show that they have been imposed on recal-

citrant ryots. This complaint is universal. I told the ryots that you said that only nominal fines were imposed when the ryots came to you for adjustment of their mutual quarrels and that you refunded these to the winners. The ryots resolutely protested and said that the fines even as much as Rs. 25 at a time and more were imposed for the so-called offences against the concern.

The ryots are equally firm in their complaint against your *Jamadar* (*Jamodar*), Gokul Misra, and I would be pleased to place the evidence before you if you will care to go farther into the matter.

With reference to the method (I understand only recently adopted) of charging for permission to build new buildings or to rebuild, you justified the charge on the ground that the earth on the ryots' tenement belonged to the landlord and if the ryots used it for building purposes, they must pay for it. I find, on looking up the Bengal Tenancy Act, that the law allows the ryots to build without any interference from the landlord so long as they build for the benefit of their holdings. It seems to me that the charge is not warranted by law and I hope that you will waive it in future.

There remains then the question of cutting trees. The section of the Bengal Tenancy Act dealing with the subject clearly allows the cultivator to cut without previous notice so or permission of the landlord. But I understand that of late years the landlords have all over been receiving half of the timber cut. I do not know whether the custom has been proved; this is a large question which can await settlement.

I await papers promised by you regarding the *Kada Pan*. As to Sitaram Tewari I think Rs. 36 on eleven *kathas* is a clerical error and I venture to suggest that it would be graceful on your part to recognize the error and take the rent at the usual assessment rate.

I would beg of you to carefully consider the points mentioned herein and if you can grant relief to your ryots in accordance with the suggestions made above I do not doubt

that it will lead to a lasting peace between your concern and its ryots and, what is more, it will be a simple act of justice (*Letter written by Mahatma Gandhi to Mr. Holtum, Manager of Dhokraha and Lehina concerns, on the 15th May, 1917*).

(19) "I have hitherto refrained from bringing to your notice statements, which have continued to stream in to the effect, that the *ryots* are being prevented from coming into me and that those who have come in have been subjected to all kinds of pin-pricks by the *Kathi Amils* (factory officers) and in some cases by the managers themselves. I have discounted some of the statements. I have taken down a few. But if what I have heard about the doings of the Belwa and the Dhokraha concerns is true, it is calculated to end on one side at least, the friendly spirit in which the inquiry has hitherto been carried on. I am most anxious to continue and to increase the friendly spirit. I am straining every nerve so far as in me lies, to so conduct my mission that nothing but good-will should be left behind, when its labours are finished. I send you the statements taken regarding the Belwa and the Dhokraha concerns. If the statements are true, they do not reflect any credit upon the concerns in question. I enclose, too, my letter to Mr. Holtum which was written before I heard of the fire and which was despatched before I took the statements of the Dhokraha men last evening after 6.30 P.M.

I can understand and even appreciate the feelings which are bound to fill those who are called upon to contemplate the prospect of having to forego huge incomes which they have hitherto been in the habit, for a long time, of receiving from their *ryots*. One cannot, therefore, mind any legitimate effort on their part to hold on to what they have considered as their rights. But what is reported to have happened at the Belwa and Dhokraha *Dekats* (interior parts) does not in my opinion fall under such a category.

It is a known fact that the desire of the planters generally is, that my friends and I should not carry on our work. I can only say that nothing but physical force from the Government or an absolute guarantee that the admitted

or provable wrongs of the *ryots* are to stop for ever can possibly remove us from the District. What I have seen of the condition of the *ryots* is sufficient to convince me that if we withdrew at this stage, we would stand condemned before man and God and what is most important of all, we would never be able to forgive ourselves.

But the mission is totally of peace. I cannot too often give the assurance that, I bear no ill will against the planters. I have been told that that is true of myself but that my friends are fired with an anti-English movement. I can only say that I do not know a body of men who have less of that feeling than my friends. I was not prepared for this pleasant revelation. I was prepared for some degree of ill-will. I would have held it excusable. I do not know that I have not been guilty of it myself under circumstances which have appeared to me most provoking. But if I found that any of my associates were, in the conduct of this mission, actuated by any ill-will at all, I should dissociate myself entirely from them and insist upon their leaving the mission. At the same time the determination to secure freedom for the *ryots* from the yoke that is weighing them down is inflexible.

Cannot the Government secure that freedom? This is a natural exclamation. My answer is that they cannot, in cases like this, without such assistance as is afforded to them by my mission. The Government machinery is designedly slow. It moves, must move along the line of least resistance. Reformers like myself, who have no other axe to grind but that of reform they are handling for the time being, specialise and create a force which the Government must reckon with. Reformers may go wrong by being overzealous, indiscreet or indolent and ignorant. The Government may go wrong by being impatient of them or over-confident of their ability to do without them. I hope, in this case, neither catastrophe will take place and the grievances, which I have already submitted and which are mostly admitted will be effectively redressed. Then the planters will have no cause to fear or suspect the mission of which I have the

honour to be in charge and they will gladly accept the assistance of volunteers who will carry on the work of education and sanitation among the villagers and act as links between them and the *rayats*.

Pray, excuse the length of this letter as also its argumentative character. I could not avoid it, if I was to place my true position before you. In bringing the two matters which have necessitated this communication, I have no desire to seek legal relief. But I ask you to use such administrative influence as you can to preserve the friendly spirit which has hitherto prevailed between the *Kothar* and my friends and myself.

I do not wish to suggest that the *Kothar*, in question, are responsible for the fires. That is the suspicion of some of the *rayats*. I have talked to hundreds of them about the two fires. They say that the *rayats* are not responsible for them, that they have no connection with the mission. I readily accept this repudiation because we are incessantly telling the *rayats* that this is not a mission of violence or reprisals and that any such thing on their part can only delay relief. But if the *Kothar* may not be held responsible for them, they may not seek to establish a connection between them and the mission. Fires have taken place before now and mission or no mission they will take place for ever. Neither party may blame the other without the clearest possible proofs.

There is talk too, about the lives of the planters being in danger. Surely this cannot be serious talk. Any way, the mission cannot render them less safe than they are. The character of the mission is wholly against any such activity. It is designed to seek relief by self-suffering, never by doing violence to the supposed or real wrong-doer. And this lesson has been inculcated among the *rayats* in season and out of season.

Lastly there is, I fear, ample proof of intimidation such as is described in the statements hereto attached. Intimidation can only mean more trouble all round without meaning

the slightest relief to the planters in the shape of retention of the present system.

I seek such help as you can vouchsafe in the circumstances I have ventured to place before you.

I am sending a copy to Mr. Lewis." (*Letter, dated 30th May, 1917, written by Mahatma Gandhi from Belitoh to Mr. W.B. Heycock*).

(19) "Lakhan Rai and Kawaldhari, both rayats of Barnatola village, Basatpur, in your *claks* tell me that their crops were uprooted and removed by your men on Sunday and Monday last, and that the removal took place in your presence. They further state that this was done as a punishment for their having come previously and made statements before my colleagues at Motihari. I may say that several men have come forward who have corroborated Lakhan Rai's statement as to the uprooting and removal of crops. I shall be obliged if you will be good enough to let me know whether there is any truth in the statements made." (*Letter, dated 24th May, 1917, written by Mahatma Gandhi to Mr. W.S. Irwin of Motihari Factory*).

(19a) "I arrived here last night and hope to remain in Motihari upto Sunday afternoon. I shall be at your disposal during the time." (*Letter, dated 24th May, 1917, written by Mahatma Gandhi from Motihari to Mr. W.B. Heycock*).

(20) "I have just now before me men from Ransingh Chhatrauni who tell me that they were beaten by Mr. Irwin on Sunday night. They say there are men too who saw an assault committed on a third man and themselves by the factorymen.

Another man tells me that over fifty *bighas* of their own land was taken away from them by the *Kotli* in exchange for some other land for which they did not then care and do not now care.

If these statements are true, they are serious. As there appears to be some tension, I want, as far as is possible, to avoid for a little time having to go to the *Dehats*. But I

feel, however, that I should visit Chhatauni this evening and I shall leave here at 5.30 P.M. precisely unless you desire me to adopt any other course." (*Letter, dated 22nd May, 1917, written by Mahatma Gandhi from Motihari to Mr. W.B. Heycock*).

*Reply*

"Dear Mr. Gandhi.

Thank you for your note. I have no wish to advise in this case as I am not aware of the facts. I prefer to leave it to you to do as you think fit.

*Yours truly,  
W.B.H."*

(21) "I thank you for your note of yesterday's date. I received it at 6.45 A.M. today. My messenger who took my note told me that you were away and brought the information that you were expected back at about 2 P.M. After waiting up to 6 P.M. I decided to go to Chhatauni as I was anxious to pay a surprise visit and as I had prevented the men who had come to me from preceding me."

(*Letter, dated 26th May, 1917, written by Mahatma Gandhi from Motihari to Mr. W.B. Heycock*.)

(22) "Owing to certain statements made by your rajpats of Tola Gujpara Ram Singh Chhatauni, I paid on Friday last a surprise visit to the Tola at about 8 P.M.

I met over fifty villagers and they pointed out to me a piece of land said to be 51 bighas in extent which (they said) had been recently converted by you into *graut*. They said that in most cases they were given an equivalent in extent but not in quality. They pointed out the village pasturage bordering in the converted *graut* which (they said) had now become practically inaccessible owing to the fear of their cattle being impounded. They showed me also the only way (according to their statement) leading to the cattle pound and said that they could not for the same fear use it as it passed by the *graut*. The men bitterly complained that the dispossession which they held was forcible had caused them a great loss. They stated that at the time of the conversion they were made to put their thumb

impressions to certain documents the contents of which they did not know and the copies of which they were not given.

Hiraman Lohar, who was one of the party, told me that he was assaulted on Sunday the 20th instant by your employees for having remonstrated with them on their trying to take his *Bhusa* and that he was only released on the importunity of the villagers who intervened on his behalf. Nepali and Japal, nephew and son respectively of Hiranman, told me that as a result of the occurrence they were on their way to me. The cry was raised that they were going to the *Tana*. Your men thereupon ran after them, seized them (so it is stated) and took them to you. They added that you whipped them. One of them showed strong marks on his calves and on his back. They were sent by you to the *Murghi Khana* and were fined Rs. 10/- each. They were released at midnight on their promising to secure the fines in the morning. For these fines a guarantee was given by a *Mahajee* Liladhar Sah to your representative the next morning.

Jadural of village Katha, son of Mansingh Rai, came to me at Motihari on the 26th instant and said that he held six bighas of land, that he had paid Rs. 75/- as *Tamra* in lieu of indigo cultivation, that for failure to supply a plough to the factory and to pay a fine of Rs. 10/- in default he was dispossessed of his land and made to sign a document. He showed me a receipt No. 102 dated 1.9.23 for Rs. 14-8-9.

I feel it but right that I should bring to your notice matters of the character above referred to. I should esteem it a favour if you would throw light on the incidents I have described." (*Letter, dated 28th May, 1917, written by Mahatma Gandhi from Bettiah to Mr W.S. Brown, Chief of the Mahanadi Factory*).

(23) "I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 27th instant on the agrarian situation in Champaran.

I shall be pleased to wait on His Honour at Ranchi on Monday next, the 4th June, at midday.



Your letter raises issues which it is impossible for me to ignore if I am faithfully to serve the cause that keeps me in Champaran.

It is part of the *rajahs'* case that the planters will stop short of nothing to gain their end. I have noticed ever since my arrival the very great and undue influence that the planters enjoy over everybody and in every thing. They have striven their best to have me removed from Champaran. They have not hesitated to impute motives to the honourable men who at considerable personal sacrifice have been giving me valuable assistance. They have without doubt used at least moral persuasion in keeping the *rajahs* from coming to me. At Dhokraha I witnessed the sorrowful spectacle of two or three men declaiming, in the presence of the Manager and the Subdivisional Officer, on the virtues of the *Koshi* in front of a crowd of nearly 500 men who complained bitterly against the *Koshi* about *Zimti* land forced on them and fines exacted from them for disobedience. These witnesses were brought by the Manager from Loheria to say that Loheria had no complaint and that the Dhokraha complaints were due to the machinations of one or two agitators. Since then many Loheria *rajahs* have come and complained precisely in the same manner as Dhokraha men. It should be noted that if full justice is done to the *rajahs*, planters stand to lose huge yearly incomes and many privileges they have hitherto enjoyed. In the circumstances I do not entirely discount the statement the *rajahs* make to me that the fires have been instigated by the *Koshis* in question to discredit my mission and to remove me from their midst. The *rajahs* add that they might be given some credit for selfishness and that their self-interest should deter them from incrimination or such other acts. I have submitted to the District Magistrate the results of my inquiry into the Dhokraha fire. I beg to enclose copy of my letter to Mr. Heycock. I am, however, willing to disbelieve the *rajahs'* theory and put down the fire to natural accidents. I may add, however, that in the Dhokraha fire, it was the roofing alone that was burnt. But I venture to suggest that even if it is the wilful act of a maniacal *rajah* done in the excitement caused by

my presence, it would be no justification for my removal, unless the Government are satisfied that I have been directly or indirectly instrumental in causing the fires. Finally there have been fires in the *Kolar* before my arrival and that the excitement in Champaran as admitted by the Commissioner was in existence long before I entered Bihar. I wish respectfully to warn the Government that they will have utterly misunderstood the position if they remove me from the *rajputs*. I have no desire to do aught except to promote peace between the planters and the *rajputs* so as to secure to the *rajputs* the freedom and dignity that should belong to all mankind.

I ask the Government to dismiss from their minds the theory suggested by the planters that the present excitement is caused by mischievous persons for private reasons. Planters are too powerful to be touched by any person, no matter how mischievous he may be. The *rajputs* say that they never deserved the police guards that were placed in their villages and that they were part of the policy of repression pursued by the planters. It is admitted that in Sadi the Manager was more to blame than the *rajputs*, and yet the *rajputs* had to pay with their blood and money. It is all peace there now, because the Manager knows his work. I have before me statements from over 7,000 *rajputs* from all parts of Champaran. I have seen all of them though I have found it impossible personally to take down their statements. It is difficult for me to believe that they all tell lies at the instigation of a few mischievous men.

I enclose copies of my letters addressed to the Manager of the Modhari Concern. I have not had any reply to my first communication. Probably there is the other side to the story, but the incidents described show at what risk the *rajputs* come to me. I quote what Mr. Johnston,<sup>1</sup> one time Subdivisional Officer in Bettiah Subdivision, had to say in 1914 regarding the methods adopted by planters to bend the *rajputs* to their will:—

1. Edward Hamilton Johnston, I.C.S., Subdivisional Officer, Bettiah, in 1913-14 and Under Secretary to Government of Bihar and Orissa in the Political Department in 1917.





*Seated:* Shri Kapadia Prasad and Shri Anugraha Narayan Mehta.

*Standing:* Shri Ramkrishna Prasad and Shri Sambhumsen Verma  
(during Mahatma Gandhi's mission in Champaran).

'There are four methods prevalent in this Subdivision compelling recalcitrant tenants to pay up. The commonest way is by putting poons on, the petitions do not allege that this has been done. The next way is to attach crops standing on *Khasan*, but this also is not alleged. Then sometimes the barbers and washermen are stopped from rendering their services; the petitioners only fear this, it has not been done yet. Finally, a very effective means is to impound the *rajats'* cattle either in a private pound or if the D.B. pound is leased out to the landlord then in it.'

The report itself is otherwise hostile to the *rajats*. I am of opinion that it did not do justice to the *rajats*. I give this opinion in all humility and after having thoroughly gone into the situation. It is often forgotten that it is not necessary for the planters to resort to force actually in every case. The fact that it is there to be used on the slightest attempt at the show of independence is enough to prevent recalcitrancy. I respectfully submit that planters have had it their own way long enough that the *rajats* are in a condition of paralysis. They are worthy of patient care and attention from the Government. But the latter will not render that help, unless they are prepared to believe the *rajats'* story (exaggerated no doubt it will be) in preference to the planters.'

I tender my apology for the length of this communication. If I have been over-frank the cause I espouse must be my excuse. It is too great to admit of tinkering. I hope that at a crisis like the one that faces the Government and the people of India, the Government do not wish me to conceal my feelings.

I am deeply grateful to His Honour that he has decided to have a personal conversation with me. I shall hope for the sake of the *rajats* that nothing I may say or do will adversely affect their cause, and that I shall find the right word in His Honour's presence so that he can appreciate the awfulness of the *rajats'* position even as I do" (*Letter, dated 30th May, 1917, written by Mahatma Gandhi from Bettiah to the Chief Secretary to Government of Bihar*).

(24) "I beg to enclose herewith for your information copy of my letter to Mr. Irwin.

I have received a summons to wait on the L.G. at Ranchi on the 4th June." (*Letter, dated 30th May, 1917, written by Mahatma Gandhi from Bettiah to Mr. W.B. Hycok*).

(25) "I think I promised to refer you to the report from which I had quoted to you regarding the methods the factories adopted to make the *vajais* to do their will. This report is dated the 22nd July, 1914, and is signed by E.H. Johnston, S.D.O., Bettiah. It is a report about the Baira Factory."

(*Letter, dated 1st June, 1917, written by Mahatma Gandhi from Bettiah to Mr. W.B. Hycok*).

(26) "In accordance with your suggestion, I reduce to writing my views about the proposed inquiry.

In my opinion simultaneously with the appointment of a Committee of Enquiry (or arbitration, as suggested herein below), there should be declaration regarding the various points referred to in my letter to the Government, dated the 13th May last. *Takathis* in every shape and form, hand-notes being balances of *taxen* and *kusks* as in the Dhokraha *Kotha*, should be declared as abolished or cancelled.

I have no desire, if I can help it, to lead evidence as to the coercive methods adopted by the planters to bend the *vajais* to their will except in so far as it may be necessary regarding *sharabshi* and *taxen*. I am anxious to see cordial relations established between the planters and the *vajais*. And in any inquiry that is the result of a mutual understanding an investigation into methods of coercion can find no place.

There would then remain only the question of *sharabshi*, *raita* and individual hardships, in the shape of *vajais* having been dispossessed of their lands, etc., and the refund of *taxen* and *sharabshi* already taken. These the Committee will investigate. *Sharabshi* payments should meanwhile be suspended.

The Committee will confine its attention to *Sharabshi* *raita* not covered by the forthcoming judgment of the High

Court, the latter to be accepted as final by both the parties. Inquiry into *shardari sales* will then naturally be postponed till after the judgment of the High Court.

Upon the Committee being appointed the scope of our work will be altered. It will then consist in collecting, collating and leading evidence and in simultaneously carrying out the educative and protective programme sketched before you.

Such a Committee, then, may be in the nature of an arbitration of which the planters' and the *rajats*' nominees (one of each) will be members with the right to them to appoint an umpire. The decision of the arbitration should be treated as final and binding on both the parties. Behind it, in the place of judicial authority, will be that of the Government, if either party failed to carry out the award of the arbitration. This is a domestic quarrel and if it is settled in the manner indicated by me, it will create healthy precedent.

If, however, it may not be in the nature of an arbitration, it will then be a Committee appointed by the Government two members being the same as under arbitration scheme and the President being a High Court Judge.

If there is any point herein which requires elucidation and if it is so desired, I shall be prepared to wait on the Council at any time required." (*Letter, dated 4th June, 1917, written by Mahatma Gandhi from Ranchi to Maharaja Bahadur Sir Rameshwar Singh of Darbhanga, Member, Executive Council, Bihar and Orissa*).

(26a) "What purpose to be the authoritative information appears as Associated Press Telegram to-day's "Englishman" If planters desire open enquiry I am entirely satisfied; my suggestion regarding privacy was wholly in their interest; cannot help expressing regret appearance information makes my position delicate with friends who though entitled to information cannot receive it from me proceeding Betiah immediately." (*Telegram, dated Bankipur, 24th June, 1917, from Mahatma Gandhi to the Chief Secretary at Ranchi*).

(27) "I arrived here yesterday afternoon. Dr. Dev. of the Servants of India Society has been appointed by the Society to serve with me during the rest of my stay and work in Champaran, and though his services are not required at the present moment he has come to study my method of work so that his work may be the easier when the volunteers go out to the villages to render assistance. Dr. Dev. is naturally anxious to report himself to you and to wait on you whenever you can send an appointment for him."

*(Letter written by Mahatma Gandhi from Motihari to Mr. W. B. Hayesack, dated 29th June, 1917).*

(28) "I thank you for your note enclosing His Honour's note.

I enclose herewith the envelope in which your letter was enclosed. I was able to extract the contents without much difficulty.

The taking of statements in Bettiah has been stopped by us from yesterday. I am going to Motihari tomorrow to stop the taking of statements there."

*(Letter written by Mahatma Gandhi to Mr. H. McPherson, Chief Secretary to the Government of Bihar and Orissa, from Bettiah on the 10th June, 1917).*

(29) "I thank you for your letter of the 9th inst. The Associated Press message becomes a perfect mystery if it is taken for granted, as I think it must be, that the leakage could not have taken place from my side. Apart from the intrinsic evidence the message bears of not having been received from my side, I may say that I had given the details of the interview to no one in Bankipore before 6 P.M. i.e. till after the arrival of the Hon'ble Pandit Malaviyaji and several things alluded to in the message were not even mentioned during the conversation I had with Mr. Malaviyaji and four other friends."

*(Letter written by Mahatma Gandhi to Mr. H. McPherson, Chief Secretary to the Government of Bihar and Orissa, from Bettiah on the 11th June, 1917).*





(30) "I went over to Motihari yesterday and formally stopped the taking of statements. I have told the *rajahs* that the Government are about to appoint a Committee of Inquiry which is likely to commence its work about the middle of July next and which will listen to their tale in so far as it may be necessary. And I have told them that in view of the above-mentioned decision of the Government it is no longer necessary for me to take their statements.

I am shifting the headquarters to Motihari where my work and that of my colleagues will consist in studying and analysing the evidence we have already collected and in putting it in a presentable form. The *rajahs* will still continue to come to us for information and guidance. I do notice that to allow them to talk to us in any manner they choose is a great relief to them and they readily accept the advice that is given to them. They are being told not to disturb the existing situation pending the enquiry except where it is manifestly illegal and in no case to take the law in their own hands.

I am not leaving for Ahmadabad till the resolution appointing the Committee is published and the hot controversy going on in the Press has subsided a little. If you could please drop me a wire as to when the resolution is likely to be gazetted, I shall be obliged.

6902

Pray send all letters to Motihari after receipt of this. I am in Bettiah all day tomorrow (Thursday)."

*(Letter written by Mahatma Gandhi to Mrs. H. McPherson, Chief Secretary to the Government of Bihar and Orissa, from Bettiah on the 18th June, 1917).*

(31) "Your letter of the 18th instant followed me whilst I was travelling. I returned from Ahmadabad yesterday afternoon after an absence of eleven days. My co-workers have not made it a point of absenting themselves from Champaran but most of them have been absent off and on for their own businesses. They have not been in evidence as their work has been confined to preparing for me a digest of the evidence collected by me and giving information to

the enquiries. There is I think complete absence of stir, as the taking of evidence and visits to the *Debats* have been religiously avoided." (*Letter written by Mahatma Gandhi to Mr. H. McPherson, Chief Secretary to the Government of Bihar and Orissa, from Motihari on the 29th June, 1917*).

(32) "I thank you for your confidential note of the 23rd instant just received. I had no intention of misconstruing your silence. But I appreciate the absolute fairness of your warning. The step I wish to take after a settlement of the question is, I know, full of possibilities and I wish to give you the assurance that nothing will be done by me without the fullest details being known by the Government and without due regard to every material circumstance."

(*Letter, dated 25th July, 1917, written by Mahatma Gandhi from Almorah to Mr. W.B. Heycock*).

(33) About *Sarakhati*.

"In my humble opinion (1) the existence of the Committee is due to the evils of the *Tikathia* system; (2) its chief function is to deal with it in an equitable manner; and (3) it is expected to make such recommendations as would settle the matter once for all, would restore harmony between *zamindars* or *tikadars* and the *rayats* and would prevent future disputes whether in the shape of law suits or otherwise.

If *tikathia* is abolished for a consideration, the Committee will have neglected its primary duty. The Committee has been appointed in spite of the *tikathia* system being the subject matter of a law suit. The Committee has overwhelming proof before it to know that *tikathia* has bound the *rayat* like the coil of a serpent from which whether it be legal or not the *rayats* have ever striven to get free and from which the Government have hitherto made unsuccessful attempts to free them. Official evidence before us goes to show that it has taxed the officials' wit to the utmost in their endeavour to get out of it; they attribute every thing to *tikathia*. There is much truth in Mr. Whitty's remark that though he can produce no direct evidence to show

that *talathi* is responsible for the *shamsi* etc. he has felt it to be so. In the circumstances the Committee, I venture to submit, is bound to condemn it in unequivocal terms and advise its abolition without any consideration whatsoever being paid by the *rajaes*. The legality of slavery, when once its sinfulness was recognized, did not require a price from the slave for his freedom.

It is submitted therefore that the least the Committee can do is—

- (1) to abolish *talathi* unconditionally;
- (2) to abolish *sarabheski* without interference with the past collections at the *sarabheski* rates;
- (3) to cancel *sarabheski* whether registered as a matter of contract or compromise subject however to enhancement of the pre-*sarabheski* rent as in *khani* or *stata* villages.

The result of such a settlement will mean withdrawal of the High Court case and lasting peace so far as *talathi* and *sarabheski* are concerned.

The result of leaving the matter to be decided as a matter of law pure and simple will be a fruitful source of interminable disputes in which the longest purse alone must win. It will promote bitterness between parties and reopening of many cases in the event of the *rajaes* winning, decided under the Sweet's Settlement and will mean loss to the landlords of the enhancement offered under the foregoing scheme. Neither the Government nor the Committee can contemplate with equanimity such a state of things. Finally if Taxes is bad, *sarabheski* is worse from the *rajaes*' standpoint. The former has pinched the present party, the latter leaves a legacy to generations yet unborn. We know too that *sarabheski* was proposed and taken when indigo was no longer a profitable proposition for the planter and that the Rajpur concern has shown that *Khaki* indigo has been taken up practically without any extra cost to the planter. So with *sarabheski* he has a fair prospect of having obtained the utmost enhancement in his rents and a continuance of profits from indigo under

another form." (*Note by Mahatma Gandhi, dated British, the 29th July, 1917*).

(34) "I have thought, slept, prayed and read I Cor. XIII which latter I always do before coming to the Committee meetings. I have discussed the question with my friends too. I was surprised to find in Babu Brajakishore the strongest supporter of Mr. Rainy's energetic defence of the fairness of the enhancement so far as it is measured by the outturn. All the others resisted him. Babu Brajakishore to my astonishment held his ground and said that on the score of lowness of rent he was entirely at one with Mr. Sweeney's finding. His argument however is totally unconvincing. But all my friends held that I would sell the *rayat's* cause, if I agreed to the Planters' proposition. They unanimously appreciated the fact that the Planters who are so strong in every way had at all accepted the idea of a reduction of *samabeshi*. The majority of them would have me to buy peace from the Committee even though it may mean a big sacrifice. I thought that I ought to mention these pleasing incidents. They sugar well for the future. My friends who represent as I hold, the culture of Bihar are not fanatics as planter friends have so often urged. There is no greater fanatic among us than myself.

Now for my offer which is absolutely final. My last state was to accept the Raja Sahab's proposition. That reduced to percentage represents a reduction of 33 per cent as against Planters' 25 per cent. And if I am to write a disarming minute, I should write in defence of that offer with the clearest conscience. For the sake of securing unanimity among ourselves I am prepared to accept a reduction of 40 per cent only i.e. 13 per cent more than the Planters' offer. For me this beaders, in my language, upon the penal. Under the Planters' offer they get Rs. 0-6-7 per rupee, under mine Rs. 0-3-3 per rupee. My final offer therefore covers all possibilities the possibility even of Mr. Whitney's appeal succeeding.

My own original offer was a rise of Rs. 0-3-0 in the rupee. That is equivalent to a reduction of 66 per cent. My present offer represents a reduction of 40 per cent. I

have therefore put up 26 per cent. If then pressure is now to be applied it must be not to me but to the Planters.

Mr. Irwin has without the slightest justification taken large sums in Taxes and has collected *sarakdari* for the past 6 years. He can have little to grumble about if he accepts my offer. For both Turkaulia and Peeprah there is evidence before the Committee of sufficient pressure exerted upon the *rajahs* to violate *sarakdari*. We have it on record that Mr. Sweeney in coming to his decision on coercion had not read the judgment in Lomraj Singh's case nor had he the full bench decision before him on undue influence. It is settled law now that there is no distinction between undue influence and coercion. I just mention these facts to show that we as a Committee dare not ignore them. It is not possible to base our decision merely on the theoretical ground of the so-called lawlessness of rent.

I am sure the Committee will think a hundred times before putting on the Government the strain of arbitrating upon a figure disputed between its members. I have gone to the furthest limit in order to avoid any such calamity. If you and the other members cannot find it in your conscience to accept my approach, I shall sorrowfully write my minute of dissent but it will be as I have said, in support of 33 per cent reduction; 40 percent reduction is for the consideration of the members (and the Planters only, if, in your opinion, they should be consulted again).

I have omitted decimals in my figures."

*(Letter from Mahatma Gandhi to Mr. F. G. Sly, Chairman, Champaran Enquiry Committee, dated Dettliak, 13th August, 1917).*

(33) "Here are some statements from your *rajahs*. I have been sending some of such statements to the Collector. He however is loath to take executive action. From his standpoint he is right. I want to avoid court cases if I can. I am therefore taking the liberty of sending the enclosed to you for your investigation. If the statement is true, you will admit that your *rajahs* should be free from such molestation."

*(Letter, dated 15th August, 1917, written by Mahatma Gandhi from Malabar to Mr. J. B. Norman, Manager, Pipsa Indigo concern).*

(35a) "I beg to thank you for your letter of the 1st instant. The report was unanimously signed to-day. May I suggest that it and the Government resolution be published at the earliest possible moment? You will be glad to learn that some of the Planters are anxious that I should go to Champaran at an early date and commence the work of pacification. May I tell the *sejats* what the Committee reported?"

Your extreme goodness to me prompts me to make a request. May I hope that the resolution will be worthy of the occasion and drawn up in no uncertain language? The message to the *sejats* in the vernacular ought to be full and such as to reach their hearts. If it is not impertinence on my part to say so, I would like to state that my services in this matter are at the disposal of the Government should they require them.

I shall be in Motihari on the 8th and shall be there till the 12th instant. I have an engagement in Bhagalpur on the 15th instant and from that time forward, I shall not be free before the 7th November when I expect to return to Motihari. I am leaving Ranchi to-day."

*(Letter from Mahatma Gandhi to Sir Edward Gait, dated Ranchi, 4th October, 1917).*

(36) "I returned from my tour early this morning and found a letter lying for me. I enclose copy of same herewith.

Dr. Dev. tells me that in Mitiharna and the surrounding villages nearly 50 p.c. of the population is suffering from a fever which often proves fatal. Our workers are rendering all the assistance they can."

*(Letter, dated 18th November, 1917, written by Mahatma Gandhi from Motihari to Mr. J.L. Merriam, Collector of Motihari).*

(37) "I think that I ought to keep you informed of my doings. Having received an offer of a ready-made school building and an invitation to open a school in a Kham village, I opened one today in Barharva Lakhansen near Daka. I have put there the best volunteer teachers from among those who have offered their assistance. They are

Mr. and Mrs. Gokhale<sup>1</sup> from Bombay. They have their independent means, and Mrs. Gokhale was doing educational work in Bombay. The nature of the work they will do I have already described to you. I am hoping, with the assistance, if possible, of the heads of the respective concerns to open similar schools, one in the Peeprah *Dehat* and another in the Tarkaulia *Dehat* and I hope to open one in the Belwa *Dehat*. As this attempt is in the nature of an experiment, I do not want to open more than four or five schools, until some definite result is obtained. I hope that I shall have the co-operation of the local officials in an experiment, which I know, is full of difficulty, but which is fraught with important consequences if it becomes successful."

(*Letter, dated 14th November, 1917, written by Mahatma Gandhi from Mutthari to Mr. Morrison*).

(36) "I visited Koeri yesterday and met Shivratan and other people. As, however, the result of the inquiry ordered by you is, I understand, to be announced to Shivratan on the 23rd instant, I postpone submitting my observation till the result is known.

*Rajats* from the Siraha *Dehat* inform me that thumb marks are being taken on some contracts by that factory. I am unable to advise them as to the action they should take until I see the drafts. I have, therefore, told them that if they wish to follow my advice they ought not to sign any document until I have seen it, as I consider myself entirely unfit to give advice otherwise. I thought that I ought to pass their information on to you. I would like to add that it would tend to smoothness of relation between the landlords and the *rajats* if the former showed you the contracts they wish to enter into with the *rajats*. As you may be aware, it has been a frequent complaint on the part of the *rajats* that they are often made or called upon to sign documents which they do not understand."

(*Letter, dated 17th November, 1917, written by Mahatma Gandhi from Mutthari to Mr. Morrison*).

1. Shrijiit Babas Gokhale, a Europe-trained reputed Engineer of Bombay, and his wife Shriemati Abanckabai Gokhale.

(39) "In the schools I am opening, children under the age of 12 only are admitted. The idea is to get hold of as many children as possible and to give them an allround education, i.e. a knowledge of Hindi or Urdu, and through that medium, of Arithmetic, rudiments of History and Geography, a knowledge of simple scientific principles and some industrial training. No cut and dried syllabus has been yet prepared, because I am going along an unbeaten track. I look upon our own present system with horror and distrust. Instead of developing the moral and the mental faculties of the little children, it dwarfs them. In my experiment whilst I shall draw upon what is good in it, I shall endeavour to avoid the defects of the present system. The chief thing aimed at is contact of the children with men and women of culture and unimpeachable moral character. That to me is education. Literary training is to be used merely as a means to that end. The industrial training is designed to give the boys and girls who may come to us, an additional means of livelihood. It is not intended that on completing their education, they should leave their hereditary occupation viz. agriculture, but make use of the knowledge gained in the school to refine agriculture and agricultural life. Our teachers will, also, touch the lives of the grown-up people and if at all possible penetrate the 'pardah'. Instructions will, therefore, be given to grown-up people in hygiene, and about the advantages of joint action for the promotion of communal welfare, such as the making of village roads proper, the sinking of wells etc. And as no school will be manned by teachers who are not men or women of good training, we propose to give free medical aid so far as is possible. In Barharwa, for instance, Mrs. Abantikabai Gokhale who is a trained nurse and midwife and who, assisted by her husband, is in charge of the school, has already dispensed castor oil and quinine to scores of patients during the four days that she has been at work, and visited several female patients.

If you desire any further information, I shall be only too glad to supply you with it. My hope is that I shall be able to enlist in my work full co-operation of the local



authority. I am opening another school tomorrow near Shārampur about two miles from Amolwa.

Regarding the *rajats*' complaints about documents evidently the point I wished to make was not made by me. I know that the *rajats* can go to court about compulsion. The difficulty is that they are neither trained nor organized enough for orderly work. What is morally compulsion may not be compulsion in law. My experience of the Ghamparan *rajat* is that he is extremely unintelligent and is easily made to assent mentally to any proposition. I hold, therefore, that the Government, as the guardian of such people, have to save them from their own ignorance. I do not say that in the Saraiya case brought to your notice any compulsion has been used. I simply suggested that in order that there might be no allegation of compulsion after such documents as I have referred to in my previous letter are signed, you might, if you deemed it proper, inquire about the contracts now offered to the *rajats* for their signatures."

(*Letter, dated 19th November, 1917, written by Mahatma Gandhi from Motihari to Mr. Merriman*).

(40) "I went over to Mitihara (? Bhitharwa) on Tuesday last and opened a school there. Mr. Soman, a public worker from Belgaum, and a B.A., L.L.B., has been left in charge, and he will be assisted by Mr. Balkrishna,<sup>1</sup> a young man from Gujarat. Mrs. Gandhi will join them on the 24th. Her work will be chiefly confined to moving among the women.

I was in Barharwa yesterday, and Mrs. Gokhale and my son were just returning from a visit to a dying man. They told me that the people in the District were woefully neglectful of the patients, and they believed that many preventable deaths must occur in the District for want of a simple observance of the rudimentary principles of Hygiene. I know that this will not come to you as news, because it is not peculiar condition of the District in which Mrs. Gokhale is working, or of Ghamparan, but it is a chronic condition among the peasantry of India.

1. Shriji Balkrishna Yogerwar Parohit.

I simply mentioned the incidents in order that as soon as I have advanced a little more in my experiments, I may enlist your active sympathy and help in a department in which all can meet without reserves.

Dr. Dev., who is a qualified and experienced surgeon and physician, and Secretary of the Servants of India Society, came on Tuesday. His services have been lent for this work by the Society. He has come with three more volunteers including a lady from Prof. Karve's Widows' Home Dr. Dev. will chiefly supervise the medical branch of the work.

I may state that I shall be away from Champaran for over a fortnight. Babu Brijkishore Prasad will represent me in my absence."

*(Letter, dated 22nd November, 1917, written by Mahatma Gandhi from Motihari to Mr. Merriam).*

(41) "I have the honour to acknowledge receipt of your letter No. 116-II- T-44-R.T. of the 6th December 1917, enclosing copy of the Champaran Agrarian Bill and inviting my remarks thereon. I beg to submit as follows:—

(1) With reference to section 4 I observe that although both sub-sections (a) and (b) apply to the same transaction, sub-section (a) covers a wider area than sub-section (b). I have not been able to conjecture any reason for it. But I suggest that the wording of sub-section (b) may be copied for sub-section (a) and therefore the word "condition" occurring in the second line of sub-section (a) be removed. And the words "section 3" occurring in line 3 thereof may be replaced by "sub-section 2 of section 3."

(2) With reference to section 5 I beg to state that the Committee's recommendations cover contracts between landlords and *rajpats*, not their tenants as well as their tenants.

There are numerous cases in which *rajpats* enter into contracts with *zamindars* who are not their landlords. It is necessary therefore to amend the wording "a tenant holding under him" occurring in line 2 thereof by saying "a tenant whether holding under him or otherwise," and by removing the words "grown upon the land of his tenancy or any portion thereof" occurring in lines 3 and 4 of the section.

It is suggested that these last words are redundant. It is intended that the legislature should protect the *rayats* in respect of all contracts as between *grauddars* and the *rayats* concerning the sale of produce.

(3) With reference to section 6 I fear that as it stands it is calculated to produce results the reverse of what is contemplated by the Government and the Committee. Under sub-section (1) thereof an agent who is mere straw may be put up by an unscrupulous landlord to collect *abwast*. Such an agent if he is detected will unhesitatingly suffer the penalties prescribed by the section as the landlord of the type mentioned by me will always make worth his while to do so. I therefore suggest that it is necessary in every case to make the landlord liable. Sub-section (1) therefore should be amended by removing the words "or his agent" occurring in line 1 and by adding the words "whether directly or through an agent" after the previous "who" in the said line. Sub-section 3 of the said section should be entirely removed. It is possible for a poor ignorant *rayat* to be in the right and yet be unable to prove his case. It will be a gross injustice if such an innocent *rayat* is punished. Moreover, the existence of such sub-section will act as an effective deterrent against any *rayat* lodging a complaint about *abwast*. It should be added that the power of punishing complainants for lodging false complaints is to be sparingly used. It requires a highly trained judicial mind to arrive at a firm conclusion as to complaints being false. It is therefore a dangerous thing to give summary powers to a Collector who will not be acting judicially. Lastly, a single abortion of justice under sub-section 3 is bound to result in an unscrupulous landlord being bolder in his exactions for he will know that the *rayats* after proceedings under sub-section 3 will have been cowed down. Considering all the above circumstances I trust that the sub-section in question will be removed. If, however, it is found difficult to carry the amendments to section 6 as proposed by me I suggest that the whole of the section be withdrawn. I would far rather have the less effective protection of section 73 of the Bengal Tenancy Act than have the doubtful protection of section 6.

(4) I observe that carts *satta* dealt with by the Committee have not been covered by the proposed law. There are such *satta* running into anything between 7 and 20 years with the same rate of payment throughout. Several planters in reply to questions by the Committee not being able to justify the terms of their *satta* said that they did not enforce them as a matter of fact. I venture to suggest that there ought to be a section declaring such *satta* to be void. New *satta*, if necessary for short periods, may be entered into after the rate of hire is fixed in consultation with the Divisional Commissioner. I may state even at the present moment proceedings for damages for breach of these *satta* are pending.

I have read the correspondence in the press carried on by Messrs. Irwin and Jameson and I have read also the speeches delivered by Messrs. Jameson and Kennedy in the Council on the Bill. Regarding both I wish merely to state that there is a complete answer to every one of the statements made by these writers and speakers. I have refrained from saying anything about them for fear of unnecessarily burdening the Government. But should any point raised by these gentlemen require elucidation from me, I shall be pleased to offer my views on any such point on hearing from you.<sup>21</sup>

*(Letter written by Mahatma Gandhi from Motihari to the Secretary, Revenue Department, Bihar and Orissa, on the 19th December, 1917).*

(42) "I have your letter of the 14th instant. I have now carefully gone through the Bill. I see that I must revise the view that I took of Mr. Kennedy's amendment in my conversation with you. I fear that his amendment will not meet the case if it is to cover the whole of section 3. I can accept Amendment marked A in place of clause 2, section 3. Mr. Kennedy's provision marked B by you is wholly unacceptable. Clause 1 of section 3 is necessary for the repeal of contractual *makathas*. Section 5 subject to the amendment suggested by me in my letter to the Government, dated 19th December, is necessary to give effect to the other recommendation of the Committee beyond recognition of *Abaski*

contracts. My position is clear. I would consider pledging of a tenant's land for the growing of particular crops as a revival of *inkathia*. Mr. Kennedy's effort, if I have understood him correctly, is devoted to securing such pledging. Between these two extremes there is no meeting ground."

(*Letter written by Mahatma Gandhi from Motihari to Mr. L. F. Mershead, Commissioner of the Tirhut Division, on the 15th January, 1918*).

(43) "The Hon'ble Rai Bahadur Punendu Narayan Sinha' has supplied me with the papers given to him about the Champaran Agrarian Bill. I note therein a memorandum submitted by the Champaran members of the Bihar Planters' Association, as also one from the managers of the Simri Concern. These memoranda as also certain other papers call for a reply for the consideration of the Select Committee.

Before, however, offering my observations I wish to submit that if it is at all the intention of the Government to make material alterations in the Bill a representative on behalf of the *ryots* should be appointed to the Council and should also be on the Select Committee. And I feel that nobody is so capable of sufficiently representing these interests as Babu Brajkishore Prasad or myself, and I hope my submission will receive from the Government the attention it deserves.

In considering the provisions of the Bill it is in my humble opinion of paramount importance for all concerned to remember that the Government have proclaimed to the *ryots* their decision upon the Committee's recommendations. It is respectfully suggested that the Bill is in fulfilment of the assurance issued to the *ryots* in the said proclamation. The Bill therefore does admit of any alteration such as would nullify or modify any of the clauses of the said proclamation in any material respect. As it is, owing to the acrimonious correspondence going on in the Press and all sorts of rumours set afloat by interested parties the *ryots*

1. A leading advocate of Fauna, who was enthusiastically associated with various activities of public utility. He was a Theosophist.

are becoming rusty. *Sis dat qui cito dat* applies in the present instance with peculiar force. Any undue delay in passing the Bill may spell disaster. I therefore urge that the Bill should be placed on the Statute Book of the Province as expeditiously as possible.

Coming to the examination of the papers in question I shall first take the Champaran Planters' memorandum. Generally speaking it is a paper containing a series of misrepresentations completely disavailing it to any weight being attached to it. The memorandum states that the Agrarian Committee was "admittedly appointed to allay an artificial agitation." The fact is that it was appointed in answer to the agitation set up by the Planters in expectation of the *rayats'* agitation being thereby stopped or suppressed. I cite in support the following extract from the "Pioneer," the leading organ of Anglo-Indian opinion in the country. In its issue of about the middle of May 1917, it said "It appears to us that the Government of Bihar and Orissa would do well forthwith to appoint a commission to investigate the differences which exist between the Planters and the *rayats* in the indigo districts. It is difficult to see what good can come of Mr. Gandhi's investigations. But an enquiry conducted with strict impartiality by a commission containing possibly a non-official element, would give both sides a fair opportunity of stating their case, and ought to result in a lasting peace." And by the beginning of June the Government of Bihar and Orissa decided to appoint the Champaran Agrarian Committee. On the 8th of June, 1917, the Secretary of the European Association addressed a letter to the Chief Secretary to the Government of Bihar and Orissa saying "My Council observe with great satisfaction the decision of your Government to appoint a Committee to enquire and investigate into the relations between landlords and tenants in the Province of Bihar and Orissa." The memorandum says that the *rayats'* agitation was "artificial" and organized outside Champaran. The fact is that it was and has been solely confined to Champaran and an agitation in which large masses of men took part could hardly be called an "artificial agitation". The memorandum says "the agitation

was in no way the consequence of any widespread grievances." The Government's own finding and the voluminous papers produced before the Committee by the Government completely contradict this statement.

It would hardly be dignified for me to notice the many uncalled for and groundless aspersions cast upon the Agrarian Committee.

I will now take up the various amendments to the provisions of the Bill proposed By the Champaran Planters in the memorandum.

*Amendments to Section 3, Clause (1)*—Nothing perhaps can surpass in recklessness the statement made in the memorandum that the Bill "proposes to abolish without compensation and for no adequate reason a system (*nakathia*) which has been in existence for over a hundred years." Such a statement is made in face of the fact that the Bill is designed to give partial and, in my opinion, inadequate relief from the extortionate compensation taken by the Planters for ending a system when it had ceased to become a paying proposition to them. One Planter has even made it a boast in the Press of the fact that he has taken Rs. 3,20,000 from his *raiyats* as *tauxes* and has made an addition to his rent-roll of an annual income of Rs. 52,000 by taking *khushki*. And there are several such Planters.

The whole of the argument advanced in the memorandum about the *Khushki* system simply shows that the signatories desire a modified revival of *nakathia* under the name of *Khushki*. By *Khushki* I understand a contract voluntarily entered into by the *raiyats* to supply a particular produce to his landlord for a fair price to be mutually agreed upon. Any clause in the contract binding the *raiyat* to grow a particular crop on the whole or a portion of his land or in a particular plot even selected by himself would immediately rob it of the voluntary nature, and the *raiyat* is deprived of the right to use his land as he chooses. Such a clause would contravene the provisions of section 23 read with section 178(3) (b) of the Bengal Tenancy Act. The system of advances has in the past operated as a bait and

as a snare. A *Khasli* contract should have nothing to do with the land of the *raiyat*. It should only provide for the delivery by the *raiyat* to the planter of so much of indigo by weight at a rate mutually agreed upon. The *raiyat* may produce the indigo on his own land or purchase it from others or get it from any other source. Once his land is brought in the contract the inevitable result will be that the same sense of obligation with which the growing of indigo has up to now been connected and which it is the desire of the Agrarian Committee and of the Government to remove in the interest of the future peace of the district will gradually creep in the mind of the *raiyats* and will in time overpower him. It might be mentioned that the prime concern of the legislature is not so much the prosperity or even the existence of an industry as the welfare of the *raiyats*. If the *raiyat* is to be freed entirely from the baneful effects of *taskatin* the *Khasli* system must (a) leave him free to obtain the particular crop he undertakes to supply where he likes and how he likes, his obligation being limited to supplying the quantity agreed upon; (b) make the period of *Khasli* contracts as short as possible; and (c) give him the market rate of the produce supplied by him.

The amendments (b) and (c) to section 3 (1) proposed in the memorandum as they fail to satisfy the tests set forth above, are wholly unacceptable from the *raiyats'* stand point. Coming to amendment (2) to section 3(1) proposed in the memorandum extending the period of termination of *taskatin* whether as an incident of tenancy or whether arising from *salis* or agreement to 1920 it is a most dangerous proposition and in breach of the undertaking of the three principal concerns referred to in the Committee's report. The Committee's recommendation that it should stand abolished as from October 1917 is the one recommendation which is already being acted upon. Acceptance, now, of the proposal of the Champaran planters who have signed the memorandum, would re-open the sore and give rise to unthinkable result. The proposal is designed virtually to nullify the effects of the Committee's report and the Government proclamation based thereon. The chief reason for continuing



the system is said to be that Planters have already got seed and made arrangements for the future growing of indigo. It must not, however, be forgotten that *Khurds* is at their disposal and they can make use of the seed, machinery and everything under it. It is true that real *Khurds* will not give them that hold on the *rajats* which the *settles* demand and will not give them the exorbitant profits too that they have hitherto received. But they never had a right in equity to any such one-sided advantages. Consider how we may, it is difficult to find a proper justification for continuing the system.

As to amendment (d) to section 3 (1) which seeks to continue the obligation until advances are repaid, I am sorry to find that even the Board of Revenue has fallen into the trap. A moment's thought will show that such a continuance may even lead to endless continuation of the obligation, to harassments and to a crop of law suits. There will be nothing to prevent a planter from never asking a *rajat* for a refund of the advance and thus an ignorant *rajat* may for ever remain in serfdom. I hope it will not be contended that the Planter should have security for refund of the advances. They do not need it. The *rajats* are their tenants and they have the fallen hold upon them for any financial obligation and I cannot help saying that the proposed amendment is merely a device for keeping on foot the pernicious system as long as possible. The whole of the soothing effect of the proposed legislation will be practically neutralized if the amendment in question is accepted and will put Champaran in a ferment.

*Amendments proposed to section 4 (sharabheshi):*—The first amendment to this section is based on a representation made by the managers of Sirni Concern. But the amendment as it is worded proposes to re-open the question of the rate of reduction to be allowed not only in the case of Sirni but also of Jalha and Motihari Concerns. There is absolutely no reason why the matter should be re-opened. Mr. Irwin of the Motihari Concern was party to the compromise. As to the Sirni case I do not know that I am free to interpret the attitude of the Agrarian Committee in the matter.

I can only say that without a fresh reference to the Agrarian Committee it is not possible to go behind the figures as they are a result of a solemn compromise, not merely as between the Committee and the planters but also as between the different interests represented on the Committee itself. The compromise was one and an indivisible whole and one cannot break a part of it without breaking the whole. It is not true as stated in his representation that Mr. Bion (proprietor of Sirni concern) was not called to give evidence or given opportunity of having any statements recorded. Not only did he come under the general notice issued to all to send in their statements if they wanted to give any evidence, but he had received a special call from the Committee which he had failed to answer. There is evidence enough in the Committee's report to show that in fixing the rate of reduction in the enhancements the sole determining factor was not the rates at which the enhancements were made. The reasoning applied to these cases is generally applicable to the case of Jalha also.

*Amendment to Section 4 (2).—*There is one point on which it is possible to agree with the Champaran Planters' memorandum. That the rental fixed under the Bill should be final and binding is fair; but any amendment that may be made will have to carefully guard the right of appeal on grounds of irregularity and want of jurisdiction.

*Section 5 of the Bill:—*I have already sent in my amendment to the effect that the words "grown upon the land of his tenancy or any portion thereof" be omitted from the section. I have explained in the earlier part of this letter when dealing with *shakathis* why in a *Khassli* contract no reference to the land of the *rayet* should be made.

There are two amendments to this section proposed by the Champaran Planters in the memorandum. The first is that the word "three" of clause (1) should be substituted by the word "five". In other words, it is urged that *satias* be limited to five years and not to three years only. The fact that even three years are granted is a concession. The period of *Khassli* contracts should be as short as possible. The memorandum deplores the proposed termination

of long-term *sattas* forgetting that not a single Planter witness before the Committee had the hardihood to defend long-term *sattas*. And some of them went even so far as to say that they did not enforce their *sattas*. Speaking of sugarcane *sattas* Mr. Gordon Canning (Manager of Pusa concern) said that "there were *sattas* entered into when he started sugarcane but they were not enforced and might be regarded as a dead letter."

The other suggestion in the memorandum is that the *rayats* should infinitely prefer to be paid at a flat rate based on the area of the land in which the specified crop is grown rather than by weight or appraisement. This is contrary to my experience. The real object, it may be observed, is here too as elsewhere a revival of *shikasta*."

*(Letter written by Mahatma Gandhi from Mathuri to the Secretary to the Government of Bihar and Orissa, Revenue Department, on the 24th January, 1918).*

(44) "Your kind letter of the 18th ultimo has been re-directed here. I have been wandering about in Gujarat attending to one or two rather delicate questions. Hence the delay in replying. Sir Frank Sly's version is quite correct and as soon as the Bill becomes law I shall endeavour to have the suits withdrawn. When we discussed the matter we had not contemplated legalisation of the agreement. Now that the enhancements are being legalised subject to reduction after the year 1925 the Planters' protection will not rest solely on my influence with the *rayats*. I would nevertheless strain every nerve to see that the cases are withdrawn without resort to law. There is just a possibility of a few *rayats* proving obdurate."

*(Letter written by Mahatma Gandhi from Sabarwal to the Lieutenant-Governor of Bihar and Orissa, on the 1st March, 1918).*

(45) "I have hitherto successfully resisted the temptation of either answering your or Mr. Irwin's criticisms of the humble work I am doing in Champaran. Nor am I going to succumb now except with regard to a matter which Mr. Irwin has thought fit to dwell upon and about which he

has not even taken the trouble of being correctly informed. I refer to his remarks on my manner of dressing.

My familiarity with the minor amenities of Western civilisation has taught me to respect my national costume, and it may interest Mr. Irwin to know that the dress I wear in Champaran is the dress I have always worn in India, except that for a very short period in India I fell an easy prey in common with the rest of my countrymen to the wearing of semi-European dress in the courts and elsewhere outside Kathiawar. I appeared before the Kathiawar courts now 21 years ago in precisely the dress I wear in Champaran.

One change I have made and it is that, having taken to the occupation of weaving and agriculture and having taken the vow of *Sadasti*, my clothing is now entirely hand-woven and hand-sewn and made by me or my fellow-workers. Mr. Irwin's letter suggests that I appear before the *ryots* in a dress I have temporarily and specially adopted in Champaran to produce an effect. The fact is, that I wear the national dress because it is the most natural and the most becoming for an Indian. I believe that our copying of the European dress is a sign of our degradation, humiliation and our weakness, and that we are committing a national sin in discarding a dress which is best suited to the Indian climate and which, for its simplicity, art and cheapness, is not to be beaten on the face of the earth and which answers hygienic requirements. Had it not been for a false pride and equally false notions of prestige, Englishmen here would long ago have adopted the Indian costume. I may mention incidentally that I do not go about Champaran bare headed. I do avoid shoes for sacred reasons. But I find too that it is more natural and healthier to avoid them whenever possible.

I am sorry to inform Mr. Irwin and your readers that my esteemed friend Babu Brijakishore Prasad, 'the ex-Hon'ble Member of Council', still remains unregenerate and retains the provincial cap and never walks barefoot and 'icks up' a terrible noise even in the house we are living in by wear-

big wooden sandals. He has still not the courage, in spite of most admirable contact with me, to discard his semi-anglicised dress and whenever he goes to see officials, he puts his legs into the bifurcated garment and on his own admission tortures himself by cramping his feet in inelastic shoes. I cannot induce him to believe that his clients won't desert him and the courts won't punish him if he wore his more becoming and less expensive *dhoti*. I invite you and Mr. Irwin not to believe the stories that the latter hears about me and my friends, but to join me in the crusade against educated Indians abandoning their manners, habits and customs which are not proved to be bad or harmful. Finally, I venture to warn you and Mr. Irwin that you and he will ill-serve the cause both of you consider is in danger by reason of my presence in Champaran if you continue, as you have done, to base your strictness on unproved facts. I ask you to accept my assurance that I should deem myself unworthy of the friendship and confidence of hundreds of my English friends and associates—not all of them fellow-cranks—if in similar circumstances I acted towards them differently from my own countrymen."

(*Mahatma Gandhi's letter to the Editor of the Pioneer in reply to Mr. Irwin's criticism of his dress in the Pioneer during the Champaran Enquiry*).

(46) "Mr. Irwin's latest letter published in your issue of the 12th instant compels me to court the hospitality of your columns. So long as your correspondent confined himself to matters directly affecting himself, his representations did not much matter, as the real facts were as much within the knowledge of the Government and those who are concerned with the agrarian question in Champaran, as within mine. But in the letter under notice, he has travelled outside his jurisdiction as it were, and uncharitably attacked one of the most innocent women walking on the face of the earth (and this I say although she happens to be my wife) and his unpardonably referred to a question of the greatest moment, I mean, the cow protection question, without taking the precaution as behoves a gentleman of ascertaining facts at first hand.

"My address to the Gan-vaktrini Sabha he could have easily obtained upon application to me. This at least was due to me as between man and man. Your correspondent accuses me of 'making a united attack on *rajab log* (their landlords) who slaughter and eat cows daily.' This presupposes I was addressing a comparatively microscopic audience of the Planters' race. The fact is that the audience was composed chiefly of the non-*raj* class. But I had in mind a much bigger audience, and not merely the few thousand hearers before me. I spoke under a full sense of my responsibility. The question of cow protection is, in my opinion, as large as the empire to which Mr. Irwin and I belong. I know that he is a proud father of a young lad of twenty-four, who has received by his gallantry the unique honour of colonelcy at his age. Mr. Irwin can, if he will, obtain a greater honour for himself by studying the cow question and taking his full share in its solution. He will, I promise, be then much better occupied, than when he is dashing off his misrepresentations to be published in the press and most unnecessarily preparing to bring 2,200 cases against his tenants for the sake of deriving the questionable pleasure of deeming me responsible for those cases.

I said at the meeting that the Hindus had no warrant for resenting the slaughter of cows by their Mahomedan brethren who kill them from religious conviction, so long as they themselves were a party to the killing by inches of thousands of cattle who were horribly ill-treated by their Hindu owners, to the drinking of milk drawn from cows in the inhuman dairies of Calcutta and so long as they calmly contemplated the slaughter of thousands of cattle in the slaughter-houses of India for providing beef for the European and Christian residents of India. I suggested that the first step towards procuring full protection for cows was to put their own house in order by securing absolute immunity from ill-treatment of their cattle by Hindus themselves, and then to appeal to the Europeans to abstain from beef-eating whilst resident in India, or at least to procure beef from outside India. I added that in no case could the cow protection propaganda, if it was to be based upon

religious conviction, tolerate a sacrifice of Mahomedans for the sake of saving cows, that the religious method of securing protection from Christians and Mahomedans alike was for Hindus to offer themselves a willing sacrifice of sufficient magnitude to draw out the merciful nature of Christians and Mahomedans. Rightly or wrongly worship of the cow is ingrained in the Hindu nature and I see no escape from a most bigoted and sanguinary strife over this question between Christians and Mahomedans on the one hand and Hindus on the other except in the fullest recognition and practice by the Hindus of the religion of *ahimsa*, which it is my self-imposed and humble mission in life to preach. Let the truth be faced. It must not be supposed that Hindus feel nothing about the cow slaughter going on for the European. I know that their wrath is today being buried under the awe inspired by the English rule. But there is not a Hindu throughout the length and breadth of India who does not expect one day to free his land from cow slaughter. But contrary to the genius of Hinduism as I know it he would not mind forcing even at the point of the sword either the Christian or the Mahomedan to abandon cow slaughter. I wish to play my humble part in preventing such a catastrophe and I thank Mr. Irwin for having provided me with an opportunity of inviting him and your readers to help me in my onerous mission. The mission may fail to prevent cow slaughter. But there is no reason why by patient plodding and consistent practice it should not succeed in showing the folly, the stupidity and the inhumanity of committing the crime of killing a fellow human being for the sake of saving a fellow animal.

So much on behalf of the innocent cow. A word only for my innocent wife who will never even know the wrong your correspondent has done her. If Mr. Irwin would enjoy the honour of being introduced to her he will soon find out that Mrs. Gandhi is a simple woman, almost unlettered, who knows nothing of the two *bagars* mentioned by him, even as I knew nothing of them until very recently and some time after the establishment of the rival *bagar*, referred

to by Mr. Irwin. He will then further assure himself that Mrs. Gandhi has had no hand in its establishment and is totally incapable of managing such a bazar. Lastly he will at once learn that Mrs. Gandhi's time is occupied in cooking for and serving the teachers conducting the school established in the *dehat* (interior) in question, in distributing medical relief and in moving amongst the women of the *dehat* with a view to giving them an idea of simple hygiene. Mrs. Gandhi, I may add, has not learnt the art of making speeches or addressing letters to the press.

"As to the rest of the letter, the less said the better. It is so full of palpable misrepresentations that it is difficult to deal with them with sufficient self-restraint. I can only say that I am trying to the best of my ability to fulfil the obligation, I hold myself under, of promoting goodwill between planters and ryots, and if I fail it would not be due to want of efforts on my part, but it would be largely, if not entirely, due to the mischievous propaganda Mr. Irwin is carrying on openly and some others *sub rosa* in Champaran in order to nullify the effect of the report published by the Agrarian Committee, which was brought into being not as Mr. Irwin falsely suggests at my request, but by the agitation carried on, as your files would demonstrate, by Mr. Irwin and his friends of the Anglo-Indian Association. If he is wise he will abide by his written word, voluntarily and after full discussion and deliberation, given by him at Ranchi."

*(Letter written by Mahatma Gandhi to Mr. Irwin on the 16th January, 1918, in reply to one letter published by Mr. Irwin in the Statesman, dated the 12th January, 1918).*

(47) "In an interview which I had with him yesterday, Mr. Gandhi expressed his willingness to raise a labour corps in Champaran for work in Mesopotamia, on condition that he would be allowed to accompany the Corps himself. I presume this could be arranged. Will you kindly get into communication with Mr. Gandhi on the subject? He is staying with Mr. S.K. Sahai, and might perhaps pay you



a visit in your office where you would be able to explain matters to him and tell him the terms on which labour is being recruited.

It would be well to write at once, as I fancy Mr. Gandhi will not be staying long in Ranchi."

*(Letter, dated 24th September, 1917, written by Mr. E.A. Goss, Governor of Bihar and Orissa, to E.L.L. Hammond, Esq., I.C.S., Secretary Provincial Recruiting Board, Ranchi).*

(48) "You may remember discussing with me in Ranchi the possibility of your raising a labour Corps from Champaran for service in Mesopotamia. I understand that you were prepared to raise a corps of Army bearers under your own command. I have however been told that you would be willing to raise a labour Corps. Will you kindly let me know if this is the case, and if so whether you are still willing to do so, and what, if any conditions you wish to attach. If you wish any force you raise to be a self-contained unit and not drafts to existing units, it will be necessary for me to address Army Headquarters. On the other hand if you do not want to go yourself and could assist us in obtaining men for the railway training depot at Gaya where we need 500 a month, your assistance will be much appreciated. Kindly address your reply to me at Ranchi."

*(Letter, dated the 13th December, 1917, written by Mr. Hammond to Mahatma Gandhi).*

(49) "I have just received your note of the 13th inst. Having after the conversation with you concluded that my services will not be wanted I have accepted important engagements upto the end of March next, and have just now entered upon an educational and hygienic experiment to which I attach the greatest importance and which requires my constant attention.

I should not like to leave this work and yet I do not want to lose any chance of taking what little share I can in the present war. I may find it practically impossible to raise a Corps on which I might not be serving. I would also find it difficult to get men if I could not assure them

that they would all work in a body and with me. Will you please tell me in detail what your requirements are and when you will want the Corps and I shall see whether I can fit in. You will please tell me in each case the nature of work required and if possible the destination of the proposed Corps".

*(Letter, dated the 15th December, 1917, written by Mahatma Gandhi from Malabar to Mr. Hammond).*

(50) "You will forgive me for not replying earlier to your letter of blank date in December. The fact is that I have been travelling out of Champaran. I returned only on the 12th inst. My difficulty just now is that whilst the Agrarian position remained uncertain I would make no headway. The Agrarian Bill is now before the Council. My way will be cleared after it is passed. I shall then try to follow out your suggestion and see what can be done."

*(Letter, dated 14th January, 1918, written by Mahatma Gandhi from Malabar to Mr. Hammond).*

## THE NON-CO-OPERATION MOVEMENT

(1) "*Some doubts*—Babu Janakdhan Prasad was a staunch co-worker with me in Champaran. He has written a long letter setting forth his reasons for his belief that India has a great mission before her, and that she can achieve her purpose only by non-violent Non-Co-operation. But he has doubts which he would have me answer publicly. The letter being long, I am withholding. But the doubts are entitled to respect and I must endeavour to answer them. Here they are as framed by Babu Janakdhan Prasad.

(a) Is not the Non-Co-operation movement creating a sort of race-hatred between Englishmen and Indians, and is it in accordance with the Divine plan of universal love and brotherhood?

(b) Does not the use of words "devilish," "satanic," etc., savour of unbrotherly sentiment and incite feelings of hatred?

(c) Should not the Non-Co-operation movement be conducted on strictly non-violent and non-emotional lines both in speech and action?

(d) Is there no danger of the movement going out of control and leading to violence?

As to (a), I must say that the movement is not 'creating' race-hatred. It certainly gives, as I have already said, disciplined expression to it. You cannot eradicate evil by ignoring it. It is because I want to promote universal brotherhood that I have taken up Non-Co-operation so that, by self-purification, India may make the world better than it is.

As to (b), I know that the words 'satanic' and 'devilish' are strong, but they relate the exact truth. They describe a system, not persons. We are bound to hate evil, if we would

than it. But by means of Non-Co-operation we are able to distinguish between the evil and the evil-doer. I have found no difficulty in describing a particular activity of a brother of mine to be devilish, but I am not aware of having harboured any hatred about him. Non-Co-operation teaches us to love our fellow-men in spite of their faults, not by ignoring or overlooking them.

As to (c), the movement is certainly being conducted on strictly non-violent lines. That all Non-Co-operators have not yet thoroughly imbibed the doctrine is true. But that just shows what an evil legacy we have inherited. Emotion there is in the movement. And it will remain. A man without emotion is a man without feeling.

As to (d), there certainly is danger of the movement becoming violent. But we may no more drop non-violent Non-Co-operation because of its dangers, than we may stop freedom because of the danger of its abuse.

M.K.G.

*Young India,*  
*15th December, 1920."*

(2) "DYERISM IN CHAMPARAN?  
(By M.K. Gandhi)

"India is a land full of tragedies. Champaran probably contributes the largest number of them. The *Searchlight* of Patna has just reported one such awful tragedy. It is being investigated by a local Congress Committee of which Mr. Mazharul Haq is the Chairman. I do not propose to anticipate the verdict. I understand that the matter is also engaging the Bihar Government's attention. But as I happened to be in Bettiah, together with Maulana Shaukat Ali in connection with our Non-Co-operation tour, I venture to give my own impressions gathered from a hurried visit to the spot.

The tragedy took place about fourteen miles from Bettiah about the 30th November last. I do not think that the Government, i.e. the high officials, had any part in its enactment. Nor had the English Planters. This seems to have

been peculiarly a police matter, in which the police have acted in an irresponsible manner and without the knowledge of the higher authorities.

Its origin lies in a petty dispute between villagers that resulted in a petty assault. In connection with it a local man of influence was arrested by the police. The villagers appear to have resented it and rescued the man, and even surrounded the constables who arrested him. This proved too much for the wounded dignity of the police. The local Daroga, i.e. Sub-Inspector of Police, is said to have organised a loot in which, under the guidance and direction of the police, men from a neighbouring village also are said to have taken part. Houses were denuded of their contents—grain and ornaments. Women are reported to have been molested and robbed of their jewellery. One woman told me that she was made naked and dust was thrown into her eyes. Another was equally grossly maltreated while she was in the act of easing herself. The villagers had fled in a cowardly manner. Houses were shown to us in which the grain *kottas* were found to be emptied and broken, grain scattered about; big boxes unlocked and opened—with the contents removed.

Needless to say, that the rescued man was almost immediately rearrested and several other men, too, were arrested by the police. Among them is a local Brahmachari. He is a man of considerable influence. He has succeeded in organising *Panchayat* and through them settling local disputes. His activity bids fair to popularise the principle of arbitration among the villagers. The police, naturally wanting to undermine his influence and suspecting him to have had a hand in inciting the people to defy their authority (so it appears from the evidence given to me), have arrested the Brahmachari who is now out on bail.

I am unconcerned with the result of the trials that will now probably take place. Some of the arrested men will no doubt be convicted on concocted evidence. Of all the places in India, most perjury committed on either side is in Champaran. Incredible as it may appear, the occurrence I have reported is not the first of its kind. The Champaran peasantry is the most helpless and the most terror-stricken of all I

have seen. They dread the approach of the police and leave their villages as soon as they appear on the scene. The police have become equally demoralised: bribery and corruption are rampant among them. And each time the people have resented the police treatment, as in the case in point, they have been reduced to greater helplessness by a system of terrorism, in which the magistracy has taken no mean part on behalf of the local Dyaks.

At times the police have been reprimanded by magistrates or the Government. That they do not mind. The lower police never even know anything about such reprimands; and they care less. The system of terrorism continues and flourishes.

How are the people to be helped? How is the corruption to be removed? Certainly not by counting an official inquiry. That must result in only strengthening the police. Already the police is fortifying its position. Certainly not by the villagers seeking the protection of the courts. It is my settled conviction, based on a study of the records of cases, that in the vast majority of them the people have lost both in money and in power. An isolated discharge of an innocent man is all they can show as a result of paying fortunes to the lawyers and the bribe-takers.

This police, composed mainly of our own men, must be reformed and won over by non-resistance. We have unnecessarily vilified them instead of pitying them. They are victims of a vicious and even inglorious system. I decline to believe that the Indian policemen are inherently bad and that the Government are powerless to reform them. On the contrary, the system of Government is such as to corrupt even the most honest of men. It is based upon the practice of securing the greatest immunity for itself. It has made of prestige a fetish and has arrogated to itself the position of infallibility and protection.

Local men everywhere must therefore befriend the police, and the best way of befriending them is to cease to fear them or their authority.

In the present case, the village must be advised to forget the wrong. If they can recover stolen property by seeking the intervention of friends, they must do so. They must patiently suffer imprisonment. As defendants, they must resolutely decline to be represented by pleaders. They must give an unvarnished version to the Court. They must submit to misrepresentation, even to the taunt of having no case.

And in future, if and when such incidents happen, they must be prepared to defend themselves. It is better if they can manfully stand persecution and allow themselves to be robbed, instead of hitting in defence of their persons or property. That would indeed be their crowning triumph. But such forbearance can only be exercised out of strength and not out of weakness. Till that power is acquired, they must be prepared to resist the wrong-doer by force. When a policeman comes not to arrest but to molest, he travels beyond his authority. The citizen has then the inalienable right of treating him as a robber and dealing with him as such. He will therefore use sufficient force to prevent him from robbing. He will most decidedly use force in order to defend the honour of his womanhood. The doctrine of non-violence is not for the weak and the cowardly; it is meant for the brave and the strong. The bravest man allows himself to be killed without killing. And he desists from killing or injuring, because he knows that it is wrong to injure. Not so the villagers of Champaran. They flee from the police. They would strike and even kill a policeman, if they had no fear of the law. They gain no merit of non-violence but on the contrary incur the reproach of cowardice and unmanliness; they stand condemned before Government and man.

But the workers among a people so fallen as in Champaran will have to be most careful about what they do. They and the people will put themselves in the wrong, if they resist the police in the lawful execution of their office, even though the execution may prove or appear to them to be unlawful. The police must not be resisted if they arrest without a warrant. They must not take the law into their own hands but scrupulously obey it. The safeguard against

any serious blunder lies in the fact that on no account are they to seek the protection of the law. If, therefore, they are in the wrong, they will invariably suffer punishment. And when they are in the right, they will most probably not suffer punishment; and they will always have the satisfaction of having saved, or attempted to save, the property, or what is infinitely better, the honour of their women. In the case in point, it was wrong to rescue the man who was arrested even though in the opinion of the villagers he was innocent. It was wrong because the police had the authority in law to effect arrests. It was cowardly on their part to have fled on the approach of the police; it would have been right for them to have defended their women and their goods. If they had not fled, they, being so numerous, would easily have saved their property and protected their women merely by standing on their ground. In no case would the villagers have been justified in doing more bodily injury than was needed on the occasion. It is invariably a sign of cowardice and madness to use excessive force. A brave man does not kill a thief but arrests him and hands him to the police. A braver man uses just enough force to drive him out and thinks no more about it. The bravest realises that the thief knows no better, reasons with him, risks being thrashed and even killed, but does not retaliate. We must at any cost cease to be cowardly and unmanly.

*Young India,*  
15th December, 1920."

(3) "*Anarchy in Bihar (Note)*"

But these excesses will sometimes happen when a great revival is taking place. Fortunately, the leaders were able immediately to deal with the situation, and, probably, nobody even knows anything about the incident except those immediately concerned. Bihar is silently, but surely, organising itself. Babu Rajendra Prasad has become the Principal of a National College which has some able Professors on its staff, and their institution is making steady headway. The Professors are mostly volunteers drawing just enough for livelihood.

*Young India,*  
2nd February, 1921."



(4) Mahatma Gandhi said "that he would particularly address the labourers who had come to the meeting. He had spent all his life with labourers and therefore he knew their customs and wants. He was sorry to see the present condition of the labourers. But at the same time, he wished to tell his labourer brothers that he could not prescribe for them any remedy which would at once improve their condition within 24 hours. If he could remain in the colliery districts for some time he might be able to find that remedy, but that was not possible for him at present as he had other very important works to attend to.

India was at present suffering from a malignant complaint which he wished to cure. His brother Muhammad Ali was a well-educated man among the Indians, and he (the speaker) was a barrister. The wealthy and educated Indians had not realized that the acquisition of wealth and education (as was then imparted) was a sure sign of slavery, the bonds of which could not be broken. The Indians could not be free until they had shaken off their bondage. The wealthy and the educated had some doubts in their minds whether Indians would remain quiet if the Government did not mend itself. He had already stated that the British Government was like the Government of Ravan, and that without Non-Co-operation with this Government they could not become free. They could never gain their freedom by continuing in their present slavery. The wealthy had not the power to save Islam from danger or to get justice for the Punjab where the people were made to crawl on their bellies. That was a great slur on the whole of India. It was therefore necessary for them to continue Non-Co-operation with Government. Their faith taught them that they should have no connection with anything that was evil. If they could successfully carry on their propaganda of Non-Co-operation there was no doubt that within one year they would become pure. But their work should be carried on without any violence.

He asked the labourers and others not to forget the advice he had given them. He did not and had never told any one to consider his English brother as his enemy and to cut his throat. But he considered that this Government

and he could not therefore co-operate with it. He would not have acted in the same way with his wife or his children, or even his father in similar circumstances. He would not lose any time, as they were already slaves, for further delay would simply strengthen the bonds of slavery.

The labourers had the strength to use their *lathis*, but would harm them. They did not know when and against whom to use their sticks, and those against whom they raised their sticks and more sticks than the labourers. He advised the labourers to give up their bad habits of drinking, gambling and smoking and to make their hearts pure. It was a sin to have those habits, and the people who traded in liquor and other intoxicating drugs made money by robbing the poor labourers. It should not worry the labourers that they did not have fine clothes and jewellery. They should not be under the impression that the wealthy, who had a large quantity of jewellery, were happy, and that the labourers would also be happy if they had those things. The rich were far from being happy. They could be happy when they became free.

He advised the wealthy employers of labour to improve the condition of their labourers and thereby avoid strikes. He also advised the labourers not to strike but to be the first instance to reason with their employers.

The Congress had laid down what they were required to do. They should sever their connection with the Government; lawyers should give up their practice in British courts, children should leave their schools; and they should use *Swadeshi* articles. The women and girls of India should take to the *Charkha* or spinning wheel, and the cloth thus manufactured should be used by the Indians. They were sending out of the country crores of rupees for cotton goods which was manufactured in a foreign country. If they could retain that money in India they would be able to gain the freedom of India.

Hindus and Mussalmans were one and they should not distrust one another. They should not think that if *Swaraj* was attained there would be dissension among them, or that

one should be superior to the other. The Muhammadans need not fear the Hindus, nor should the Hindus distrust the Muhammadans. Muhammad Ali and Shaukat Ali were like his own brothers. They were Muhammadans, and yet he, a devout Hindu, considered them as his brothers. He was of opinion that as soon as the Hindus forgot the distrust of the Muhammadans, and the Muhammadans the fear of the Hindus their object would be attained. If the Hindus gave up their lives to save *Khalifat* from danger it would be in the best interests of the country.

He had just returned from a ladies' meeting where he was given a lot of money and jewellery. But he had valued most the gift of a poor woman of the labouring class who had given him some pice tied in a rag. That was in his opinion worth crores of rupees. If the labouring classes considered that they were working for the good of their country and helped them in their endeavours India would be free in no time. And if the people remained steadfast in their work of Non-Co-operation he was certain that they would attain *Swaraj* within eight months."

(*Speech of Mahatma Gandhi at Jharia on the 5th February, 1921*).

(3) Shri Mazharul Haque said "that it was a unique day for Bihar as the foundation stone of *Swaraj* was going to be laid there on that day. It was a fortunate day when a man rose to unite the several classes and creeds in India in one day. Mahatma Gandhi had come that day to formally open the *National College* at Bankipur and he hoped that that would be the beginning of *Swaraj*. He could not find words to express what the Mahatma had done for the country. But the greatest thing which the Mahatma had done was that he had brought about the unity of Hindus and Muslims. All his life the speaker had tried his best to bring about that unity because he knew that in that unity lay the freedom of India. Mahatma had shown them the way, and if they followed in that path there was no doubt that freedom would be gained for India. He was certain that all Biharis were with Mahatma Gandhi, and if the Mahatma jumped into the fire they would follow him. The time had

arrived when they should have one leader for India whom they could follow without questioning. He (the speaker) had made up his mind that so long as there was breath in him he would always follow the Mahatma. He was very sorry to find that Maulana Muhammad Ali was not with them at the meeting, because he wished to tell Maulana Muhammad Ali that no one had done as much as Muhammad Ali for the Muslims. In that work also the Mahatma had given the lead. There were seven crores of Muslims in India, but no one had raised a voice for the freedom of India until one particular man, the Mahatma came forward to help them."

Mahatma Gandhi said "that he must ask the audience to excuse him as due to weakness he could not stand and address them. He and Mr. Haque were very old friends and were like brothers. He was ashamed to say that he had entirely forgotten that Mr. Haque and he had studied together in England and that they had returned from England at the same time till he was reminded of the fact by Mr. Haque. Since then the friendship between them had increased, and it was known to them that whenever he came to Patna he always put up with Mr. Haque. It was a fact, as mentioned by Mr. Haque, that he had taken the first step as regards the *Khilafat*. He did not desire to take any great credit for this as he had only tried to do his duty. He was a devout Hindu, but if they wished to follow their religion they should be friendly with the Muhammadans even to the extent of becoming their slaves, and they should make up their minds to live with the Muhammadans as sons of the same mother. If he had done anything for the Muhammadans he had only tried to pay back the debt due to them. He would not rest till the work of *Khilafat* which he had taken in hand was complete, and if he should have to give up his life for this work he would know that he had done some good for the Hindu religion. What Mr. Haque had said about Maulana Muhammad Ali was true. When he came to India he met the Ali Brothers in Delhi. He regretted very much that they were not present at the meeting.

Mr. Haque had said that the foundation stone of *Swaraj* would be laid on that day, but he was of opinion that the foundation stone of *Swaraj* was laid on the day when the foundation stone of the *Akshafat Ashram* was laid at Jujra. There was no doubt that Mr. Haque had done a great deal for *Swaraj*, and if Mr. Haque had not sacrificed so much he (the speaker) could never have taken a part in opening the *National College* in Patna. He had heard the song which had been sung by the two boys of the *National School*, which showed him what instruction was imparted to the boys in the English schools. He knew that in the English schools the boys were not taught Sanskrit, but that was done in the *National School*. He had been asked to formally open the *National College* and to indicate how national education would be conducted in Bihar. They had started a *National University*, and Mr. Haque, Mr. Brij Kishore Prasad and Mr. Rajendra Prasad were appointed as Chancellor, Vice-Chancellor and Registrar, respectively. A number of gentlemen would be appointed as members of the Senate, some of whom would also be members of the Syndicate. Similar arrangements had been made in Gujerat. If the work of national education was to be carried on properly a great deal would depend on how the work was conducted by the Professors, the Vice-Chancellor and the Chancellor. He was certain that the cause of *Swaraj* would suffer if that work was not done in the way as it should be done. He was satisfied that those who were entrusted with this work were trustworthy men. Although he did not know Brij Kishore Prasad and Rajendra Prasad from his childhood, he knew as much of them as he knew of Mr. Haque. He was certain that these three men would do all they could for the good of the country. They had promised that they would sacrifice their lives for the sake of *Swaraj*. If they felt and acted as their *Rishis* did in the older days there was no doubt that by means of the *National College* they could help a great deal in the attainment of *Swaraj*. He would pray to God that *Swaraj* might be attained through the *National School* and *University*. The word 'education' means that whatever was inside should be brought out. Their

Professors could therefore only bring out what was hidden within the students, but so far the Professors had not been successful. If the students did not follow their *dharma* and the instruction of their teachers then he was afraid that they would not be successful in their work. The students should remember that whatever work was done in Patna would be an example for all India. His intention was to lead them from darkness into light and from untruth to truth. That was the work of *satyagrah*. There was no other meaning for *Satyagrah*.

We have so long told lies. Those who associate with liars and help them also obtain a portion of the lying habit as their share. They were liars but they had the fear of God in them. But when they found that the Government was a traitor and a sinner then they could not follow that Government. He was not the enemy of the British but he wished to destroy the Government. The British thought that they were his enemies, but he did not consider the British to be his enemies. He looked upon them as his friends. But if his wife or his brother or his teacher even did not help to obtain the freedom of the country then he would non-co-operate with them also. He could, therefore, in the same way non-co-operate with the British. He wished to carry on his work in this world with a pure heart. But when a father had got evil (*akarma*) in him then the child also inherited a portion of that evil. They should non-co-operate with those men. That did not necessarily imply that he had become the enemy of any one or that any one had become his enemy. It was therefore their duty to teach the students the principles of non-co-operation and give them instruction about religion. The work of the *National University and School* would be to impart instruction in non-violent non-co-operation. The agitation among the students in Bengal was due to the activity of Mr. G.R. Das. All the students were for Mr. Das and when he took the lead they gained courage. There were others who did not do the same thing. They were of opinion that if they remained with Government they would attain the same object. They were, therefore, trying to get the students to leave the *National Schools* and go back to

Government aided or Government institutions. They were in his opinion enemies of Hindustan. They were, however, acting according to their conscience. They might be right or wrong in what they were doing, and he also might be right or wrong in what he was doing. He was acting as his conscience dictated to him, and that was why he was advising them to be non-co-operators. They should always practise humility in whatever they did and wherever they went. The British attend meetings and call 'Shame', 'Shame' and throw stones. But they should act with patience and forbearance and their work of non-co-operation should be non-violent. By saying 'shame,' 'shame' they could not win over their brothers who were not non-co-operators. If they followed his advice then a time might come when these very people might join hands with them.

The foundation of the *National University* was being laid so that the students might be taught how to attain *Swamy* and gain the freedom of India. It was, therefore, necessary for them to forget what they had learned before and to receive fresh instruction in their own institutions. If a person did not wish to give up his practice as a barrister, *Fakir* or *mutwalli* they should not abuse him. But if they reasoned with him they might succeed. The first thing to be done was to impart instruction on proper lines according to their own faith. The second was that they should adopt *Swadeshi*. *Swamy* could be attained by means of the spinning wheel (*Charkha*). And by these means they would be able to save Indians from danger and obtain freedom for India. If the students did this then the Sepoys might also join them. The work of the students should be to learn the use of the *Charkha*. Any one could do that work. But if any intelligent person did it he would find that he could earn more by it than an unintelligent person.

The next point was that all this time they had only used their tongue for the cause of their country. They should now use their hands, not with guns, swords or *lathis*, but with sticks made put of the thread which they spun (*Charkha ke rooth ke danda le kar*). They could then attain *Swamy*. If the Indians did not have a single thread in their clothes which

was manufactured in a foreign country then he was sure that *Sarees* would be attained on that day. Their boys and girls could spin the thread."

*(Speeches delivered at the National College, Patna, on the 6th February, 1921).*

## (6) "REPRESSION IN BIHAR

*(By M. K. Gandhi)*

Bihar is a province in which the most solid work is being done in connection with Non-Co-operation. Its leaders understand the true spirit of non-violence. They are trying to curb, and are succeeding in curbing, the zeal of those who would cross the boundary-line, even in speech. There is no danger of an outbreak of violence in Bihar. The Province has a splendid record of purifying work. The temperance movement has made such rapid strides that the excise revenue is likely to be very considerably affected. The educational movement is making great progress. Many pleaders have suspended practice. The people are settling their disputes by arbitration. There are signs on every side of a national awakening of which any popular government would have been proud. Not so the Bihar Government. And, yet, people had high hopes of Bihar, for, had it not an Indian Governor, one of the ablest of India's sons, an ex-President of the Congress? Even Lord Sinha has his limitations. He has become part of a machinery which is grinding the people, and his abilities can only be utilised to run that machinery, or he must fall out.

Repression is most rampant in Bihar because the officials have become daring under the cover of an Indian Governor. Lord Sinha has become a shield for official offenders.

Let the reader judge from the following facts. Maulana Mazharul Haq and Babu Rajendra Prasad, both well known in Bihar, were prevented from going to Arrah. A letter from a friend says: 'In the Districts of Muzaffarpur, Saman, and Champaran, notices under sections 144 and 107 are being continuously served. Those who decline to be bound



over are imprisoned. Thirty such persons have already gone to gaol. Action against others is pending. It is a matter of pleasure that some of these are old men and that the women-folk, instead of being downcast over these imprisonments, have felt unconcerned, if not elated.<sup>2</sup>

Maulana Shafi or Baba Ramnand has received the following notice:—

'Whereas I am reliably informed and I am satisfied that you intend addressing a public meeting in Hajipur, in which you will exhort your hearers to suffer imprisonment even in the cause of Non-Co-operation, and will also speak on other matters in connection with Non-Co-operation, which exhortations are likely to cause excitement amongst your hearers and a breach of the public tranquility may reasonable ensue, I therefore by virtue of the powers vested in me u/s 144 C.P.C. hereby order you to abstain from delivering any speech on Non-Co-operation in any of its forms within the limits of my jurisdiction.'

The Subdivisional Officer who has signed the notice claims to have known beforehand what the gentlemen were going to speak! And it was Non-Co-operation! Speakers all over India have been asking people to prepare themselves for imprisonment. It has caused no breaking of public tranquility anywhere. All the most popular organisations have preached Non-Co-operation, and it is being preached daily from a thousand platforms. The terms of the order virtually prevent the speakers from speaking on *Swadeshi*, temperance, untouchability and Hindu-Muslim unity. They are all 'forms' of Non-Co-operation.

Another order runs as follows:—

'Whereas it has been reported to me that Brahmachari Ram Rakhsha of Bangra P.S. Gopalganj, Saran, addressed a meeting yesterday in which he denounced the Government and the British people as treacherous, pledge-breakers and tyrannical, and stated that the policy of the British Government was to set one race against another in order to rule both; and that the Government is bound to disappear on account of its *Zafar*; and that if all Indians responded to

the call of Gandhi they could expel the British Government within ten days, and it has further been reported that this speech caused great excitement, and that another such speech is likely to cause a breach of the peace, and whereas it appears that the said Brahmachari Ram Rakhsha intends to make a similar speech again today, I hereby forbid him under Sec. 144 Cr. P.C. to abstain from making any speech whatever to any gathering of five or more persons in any part of the Sitamarhi Subdivision in any open place during a period of one month from the date of this order.'

Again, what the Brahmachari has been gagged for has been uttered by thousands of lips. The charge brought against the government by the Brahmachari occurs in the preamble of the Special Congress Resolution. I have myself had the honour of denouncing the Government as 'treacherous, pledge-breakers and tyrannical.' It was left to the Magistrate of Sitamarhi to discover that it was a crime to denounce the Government in those terms.

Now the question is: what can Lord Sinha do short of resigning? He cannot supervise the actions of even Magistrates. If he did the Magistrates will non-co-operate, strike, and make his position intolerable and government impossible. Therefore, for the sake of, some day and in some way, saving his country as Governor, he makes himself believe that it is better for him to hold on to his post than make room for an English Governor. This is but the beginning of his rule. The public will find that the Civil Service under his regime will have consolidated its power more thoroughly than under an English Governor. And this, for two reasons; the Civil Service will make a greater grievance of every restraint under Lord Sinha than they would under an English Governor, and the people would submit to wrongs more cheerfully because they would naturally want to make his regime successful. And thus the strongest Indian who could possibly have been selected for the high post of a Governor will fail not because of want of effort or ability but because of the inherent evil of the system. His Excellency has been called upon to administer. It gives me no pleasure, thus, to have to criticize the rule of one for whom I entertain very

high regard. But even a Gokhale would have failed had he been called upon to administer the system with its existing spirit.

*Young India,*  
2nd March, 1921."

(7) "*The Bihar Government*—When I wrote about the Bihar Government last week, I did not know half as much as I do to-day. I rarely get the newspapers during my incessant travels. When I do get some, I find little time to read them. It was only during my visit to Lucknow that I saw the extraordinary circular of the Bihar Government practically inciting the officials to lawlessness. No wonder Non-Co-operation has become in Bihar almost a statutory crime. No wonder a Bihar Magistrate has the impudence to assault an inoffensive sanyasi in the presence of a large crowd of admirers. I do not know that such a non-violent atmosphere was possible a year ago. No wonder such a respectable leader like Mian Mohamed Shafi of Muzaffarpur was prohibited from seeing the *sanyasi* and his position as a Congress Secretary ignored. I am hoping that the Government employees will answer the Bihar Government circular by attending Non-Co-operation meetings in a body and dare it to dismiss them. One can understand the prohibition against public servants not speaking at such meetings. But to restrain them from attending Non-Co-operation meetings, or contributing funds to national institutions, or introducing the spinning wheel, is unpardonable restriction on individual liberty, to which, I trust, the public servants will refuse to be party by complying.

*Government Propaganda.* The Bihar Government is illustrating the meaning of counter-propaganda by Government, referred to in his speech by Lord Chelmsford. This Government has gagged Non-Co-operationists of unimpeachable character and invited its officials and other supporters to conduct an unopposed campaign against Non-Co-operation. I understand that overzealous *chokidars* announce these Government meetings in my name. The people gather, see unfamiliar faces, and most of them retire. Those who remain

to listen to the eloquence of co-operators are told that, if the law courts are abandoned and the drink shops are closed, the Government revenue will suffer. Thus, these Co-operation speakers put a premium on drink and litigation. I have given the substance of a graphic description given to me by a most reliable worker. It is a highly probable picture. A moment's thought will show that the Government speakers must say what my informant has attributed to them. A Non-Co-operationist usually begins by describing the *Khilafat* and the Punjab wrongs and demonstrating the satanic nature of the system under which we are governed. He ends by asking people to be peaceful, to renounce intoxicants, law-courts, schools, and foreign goods, and to take up the spinning wheel. A thoughtless Non-Co-operation speaker also abuses co-operators and ignorantly advises their social boycott. A Government speaker must declare the Government as almost angelic in spite of the *Khilafat* and the Punjab wrongs, and ask the people not to give up law-courts because they give justice, and not to give up drink because an occasional draught is no crime, and it brings revenue to the Government and enables it to conduct schools. The spinning wheel, we must contend, is an antediluvian fad impossible to reintroduce in our homes, and foreign goods we cannot do without till India has become educated and industrial to the extent of being able to compete with foreign markets. Thus Government propaganda must at least indirectly encourage drinking, litigation, and use of foreign goods.

An honest Government responsive to the wishes of the people will seize this golden opportunity of allying itself with the people, thus getting rid of the drink curse, will encourage even indifferent experiments in national education as a lesson in self-help, will stimulate the desire for settlement of disputes by arbitration, and will welcome the revival of handspinning, if only as an aid to machine manufacture and industry in the place of fineness. A Government anxious for public welfare will recognise the inner meaning of the struggle, and understand its religious nature, and, conscious of its good motive and moral strength, will be



*Sri Sri Krishna Saha engaged in spinning in 1921.*

6402



indifferent to the opposition against itself and will.....the great undoubted revival of a yearning.....strength, character, and purity. But that would mean a change of heart on the part of the Government, which need not be expected just yet.

*Young India,*  
9th March, 1921."

(8) "Bihar is the land of promise for *Non-Co-operation*, for the Hindu-Muslim Unity of Bihar is proverbial. I was therefore distressed to find that the unity was suffering a strain which might almost prove unbearable. I was told by all responsible leaders—both Hindu and Mohamedan—who are not given to be panicky—that it was taxing their resources to the utmost to avoid a Hindu-Muslim disturbance. They informed me that certain Hindus, by name Gangaram Sharma, Bhutanath and Vidyanaad for instance, had told the people that I had prohibited the use of meat to any Hindu or Mussalmans and that meat and fish were even forcibly taken away from people by overzealous vegetarians. I know that unlawful use is being made of my name in many places, but this is the most novel method of misusing it. It is generally known that I am a staunch vegetarian and good reformer. But it is not equally generally known that *Ahimsa* extends as much to human being as to lower animals and that I freely associate with meat-eaters.

I would not kill a human being for protecting a cow, as I will not kill a cow for saving a human life, be it ever so precious. Needless to say I have authorised no one to preach vegetarianism as part of *Non-Co-operation*. I do not know the persons named above. I am sure that our purpose will be defeated if propaganda of any kind is accompanied by violence. Hindus may not compel Mussalmans to abstain from meat or even beef-eating. Vegetarian Hindus may not compel other Hindus to abstain from fish, flesh or fowl. I would not make India sober at the point of the sword. Nothing has lowered the morale of the nation so much as violence. Fear has become the part of the national character. *Non-Co-operators* will make a serious mistake, if they seek to

convert people to their creed by violence. They will play into the hands of the government, if they use the slightest coercion towards anybody in the course of their propaganda.

The cow question is a big question, the greatest for a Hindu. I yield to no one in my regard for the cow. Hindus do not fulfil their trust so long as they do not possess the ability to protect the cow. That ability can be derived either from body-force or soul-force. To attempt cow protection by violence is to reduce Hinduism to Satanism and to prostitute to a base end the grand significance of cow protection. As a Mussalman friend writes, beef-eating which is merely permissible in Islam will become a duty, if compulsion is resorted to by Hindus. The latter can protect the cow only by developing the faculty for dying, for suffering. The only chance Hindus have of saving the cow in India from the butcher's knife, is by trying to save Islam from the impending peril and trusting their Mussalman countrymen to return nobility, i.e., voluntarily to protect the cow out of regard for their Hindu countrymen. The Hindus must scrupulously refrain from using any violence against Mussalmans. Suffering and trust are attributes of soul force. I have heard that at big fairs if a Mussalman is found in possession of cows or even goats, he is at times forcibly dispossessed. Those who, claiming to be Hindus, thus resort to violence, are enemies of the cow and of Hinduism. The best and the only way to save the cow is to save the *Khilafat*. I hope therefore that every *Non-Co-operator* will strain himself to the utmost to prevent the slightest tendency to violence in any shape or form, whether to protect the cow or any other animal or to effect any other purpose."

*Young India,*  
18th May, 1921."

(9) Mahatma Gandhi, accompanied by Maulana Muhammad Ali, Azad Sobha and some others reached Gaya at 9-30 A.M. on the 12th August, 1921, and addressed a huge audience there. Referring to the subject of cow protection he observed:—"..... I am impressing for a long time that



cow sacrifice is due to the enmity of Hindus towards Muhammadans. If, suppose the 6,500 populace of Gaya were to suppress cow sacrifice against 10,000 Muhammadans by force, some among the Muhammadans would certainly come forward to say 'I shall sacrifice cow in their presence.' To arrest cows from the hands of the Muhammadans was not Hindu like. It was said in Gita that religion did not consist in using force. Both the *Ramayana* and the *Gita* pointed to that very conclusion. The essence of *Dharma* consisted in maintaining peace and not in abusing brothers. They might appeal but not use force. If any Hindu went against these tenets he could be said to have never read either the *Mahabharat* or the *Mansuvrat*. The Hindus should save the *Khilafat*. If they worked in peace and harmony they would create love for Indians. If they supported *Khilafat* the necessity of cow-sacrifice would go away by itself. The Hindus should not think that Muhammadans could be their enemy. In Bombay, Messrs Chatani and Khattay had saved hundreds of cows. If they left them to their discretion cow would be saved.

If the Government servants did not side with them they should not assault them or abuse them. It was their duty to love them.

The third point that he impressed on them was about *Swadeshi*. 'That Bihar,' he said, 'was a beautiful and holy place. Here trade flourished once. Many of these people accepted service under the East India company. At first it was difficult for him to introduce *Swadeshi*. In Champaran boys who followed *Swadeshi* were laughed at. It was through God's grace that the necessity of it was being recognized gradually. He had noticed a *Pasah* (Gujarati) boy in *badshi* (foreign) clothes from head to foot. That pained him much. It made his heart ache to learn that the *Pasah* had become so indifferent. The *Pasah* were the custodians of *Dharma* and are *Sanyasin*."

## (10) "REPRESSION IN BILAR

The following note was sent by the Secretary, Provincial Congress Committee, Bihar, on 3rd June.

After the Nagpur session of the Indian National Congress, the Government policy towards the Non-Co-operation movement was enunciated in the famous Raley Circular issued to all district officers. In it the officials were asked to adopt all means in their power to combat Non-Co-operation. This was taken to be a carte blanche by certain officials, who in their zeal to crush all public spirit went to the length of forbidding meetings and speeches without the slightest justification under sec. 144 Cr. P.C., and began to threaten and prosecute several workers and sympathisers of the movement under different sections of the Cr. P.C. and I.P.C. Sections 144 and 107 of the Cr. P.C. were extensively used by these officials to put down the movement in its initial stage. Naturally the vigour of repression was most felt in those places, where the overzealous officials regarded it as their duty to kill the growing public spirit among the masses. The measure initiated by Mr. Lee of Siemarrhi, a subdivision of Muzaffarpur district, illustrates this spirit. This official showed a good deal of enthusiasm in carrying out what he thought to be the Government policy as embodied in the Raley circular, in as much as he issued a *cheetidar* circular, authorizing the appointment of additional *cheetidars*, and promising rewards to persons who could supply him with information about non-co-operators and their sympathisers in his subdivision. He further authorised levy of additional taxes upon those villages where the people had adopted the programme of N.C.O. The circular was, however, withdrawn by the District Magistrate, when the matter was agitated in the public press.

Repression went on vigorously for some time. Sec. 144 Cr. P.C. began to be used indiscriminately. Babu Rajendra Prasad and Maulvi Mazhar-ul-Haq were served with notices under this section forbidding them to enter the town of Arrah between certain hours of the day. Soon after this incident, an adjournment debate was raised in the local council by Babu Devaki Prasad Sinha, M.L.C. The Government in reply

to the debate restated their policy, and made their position clear by explaining the Rainy Circular, which, they said, was to be read along with the resolution of the Government of India on the subject. After this debate the situation was greatly eased. Repression gradually declined, and at the present moment, although it is going on in several districts in one form or another, it is not being pursued with the vigour and zeal that characterised its earlier stages. A good deal of attention is now being given to temperance workers, and a number of cases have been started against them in many districts. A short account of the nature and extent of repression in various districts is given below:—

**Muzaffarpur District:**— Repression began in this district simultaneously with several hat looting cases, which, it is asserted with confidence, were inspired by local planters and in which several factory people were involved. Secs. 144 and 167 Cr. P.C. were most liberally used, but people replied with greater display of energy and enthusiasm, and the object of the authors of these measures was thus frustrated. In all 101 persons were prosecuted under different sections of the codes of whom 26 were either acquitted or discharged, and 62 convicted. The result of 13 cases is not yet known.

**Champanan District:** This district was not seriously affected. Attempts were made in the beginning to threaten the villagers with prosecutions. In all 39 people were prosecuted, of whom 11 were convicted and 10 discharged, and the cases against the rest are either pending or their result is not yet known.

**Saran District:** There were cases against temperance workers wherein the accused were convicted. There is however a big criminal case still pending before the magistrate in Chapra, where a large number of persons are involved. This is not purely a case of N.C.O., although it had its origin in it.

**Darbhanga District:**—68 persons were prosecuted, of whom 12 were discharged and 24 convicted. 32 cases are pending.

**Gaya District:**—There was a good deal of agitation over temperance work. Two temperance volunteers were unjustly convicted, and this gave rise to a serious situation and violence was threatened. This was however averted by good sense prevailing on either side.

**Shahabad District:**—There were two cases against one of our prominent workers of this district, which created a good deal of feeling among the public. Of late some temperance cases have been started at Sasaram, and the result is anxiously awaited.

**Hazarihagh District:**—Except the regrettable incident at Giridih and prosecution of several workers at Chahna, there is no instance of direct repression in this district. But the local officers are creating a situation of inconvenience for those who are sympathising with the movement by denying all help to them when they stand in need of them, e.g. local merchants cannot import grain or get wagons from the railway authorities without the signature of the District Magistrate.

**Patna District:**—There have been a few cases against temperance workers. Some are still pending.

**Palamu District:**—Secs. 144 and 107 Cr. P.C. have been frequently used. Workers have been prosecuted and convicted for uttering "*Gandhi ki Jay*," and preaching temperance.

**Districts Bhagalpore, Monghyr and Purnea:** These districts are comparatively immune from official attentions, except in a few early cases where workers were forbidden to deliver speeches under Sec. 144 Cr. P.C. Of late, however, in Bhagalpore district we have got a report from Madhupura subdivision, where the subscribers to the *Sarvaj Fund* and *Non-Co-operation Panchet* have been molested indirectly by local officials. As usual a number of temperance workers have been prosecuted in Monghyr.

**Districts of Singhbhoom, Manbhoom and Ranchi:**—Usual cases under Sec. 144 Cr. P.C. and against temperance workers have occurred.

One excellent illustration of persecution is furnished by the case of Brahmachari Ramakrishna. The Magistrate of Sita-marhi has awarded him a barbarous sentence for a technical

offence under sec. 188 I.P.C., and has passed an illegal order, which he discovered subsequently. The matter had to be referred to the High Court for rectification of the illegality, but it has not so far been done. He stands charged under two more sections, viz. 108 Cr. P.C. and 342 I.P.C. before two Magistrates and is awaiting his trial. Another notable case is that of Babu Ramananda Singh, late Sub-Inspector of Police, who had the courage to depose truthfully in the case against Pt. Jaimandan Jha of Hajipore. He is awaiting his trial under sec. 193 I.P.C.

#### *Additional Note*

On a request to bring the foregoing to date, the following was sent:—

Although repression on an extensive scale has not been going on in the province of Bihar for some time, cases are not wanting which indicate an attempt at putting down the anti-drink campaign. Orders under sections 107 and 144 Cr. P.C. have been passed which cannot be justified under any interpretation of the sections.

I will note here some of the typical cases which have been reported in the press. One S.D.O. of Jahanabad issued a general order under sec. 144 Cr. P.C., directing that "no person shall in any way dissuade any person from going to a wine or toddy shop," but he subsequently withdrew it, saying that he never "intended to encourage drinking and never intended the notice to be of a general character."

Notice under sec. 144 Cr. P.C. was served on several workers in Palamau District on the ground that they used to "meet on public roads and at places near about the Husainabad outstill, with the object of forcibly preventing persons from visiting the outstill and causing annoyance and injury to such persons and also to the licensee of the outstill and his employees, and such acts were likely to lead to a serious disturbance of the public peace," and they were called upon to show cause why they should not be enjoined "to abstain from such acts." In the same district notices under sec. 107 Cr. P.C. were served on people on the all-

aged ground, that they were "forcibly preventing the shop-keepers from selling necessities to the complainant and other persons working at the outstill with the object of compelling them to give up their employment," and on the allegation that "they abused, threatened and used force on people who came to the Sonapur outstill in order to prevent them from purchasing wine."

A notice of quite a general nature under sec. 144 Cr. P. C. was issued at Gaya prohibiting picketing altogether. The notice ran as follows:—

"Whereas information has been given to me that the liquor shop is picketed with a view to obstruct customers desiring to enter the said shop which they are lawfully entitled to do; and as it appears necessary to take action to prevent picketing, I therefore under sec. 144 Cr. P.C. direct the public generally not to picket the said shop or to commit any action in the vicinity of the said shop likely to obstruct or intimidate any customers desiring to enter the shop."

An order under sec. 144 Cr. P.C. issued at Muzaffargarh "ordered, that every person frequenting the excise shop named below or being present within a distance of 50 yards thereof, should refrain from causing annoyance to customers and to the licensee and to such Excise and Police officers as may be posted at or near the shop to protect buyers and sellers from intimidation, insult and annoyance." The Excise and Police officers were posted not so much for the protection of the wine purchasers and sellers as for overawing the temperance workers and inducing people to drink.

At Aurangabad in the district of Gaya a notice under sec. 144 Cr. P.C. was served upon some volunteers prohibiting them from picketing or approaching liquor shops within 300 yards.

A notice issued under sec. 144 Cr. P.C. by an S.D.O. in the district of Monghyr expressly mentions the ground, that the anti-drink movement is likely to cause loss of excise revenue. A translation of the notice runs as follows:—

"Sec 144 Cr. P.C.

Karimbaksh Kalal V. Muhammad Yusuf, resident of Hazzary, Thana Sukhpura, District Monghyr.

Whereas it has been made to appear that you threaten the fast party, so that he may give up selling wine and yourself prevent purchasers and threaten them with a view to causing loss of excise revenue to the Government, by reason of which there is an apprehension of a breach of the peace.

I do hereby order you not to prevent the sale of wine and not to prevent purchasers from going to the shop, nor should you in any way interfere so that public peace may be disturbed. Be careful. Date of hearing 17-8-1921."

The action taken by the S.D.O. of Chattri in the district of Hazaribagh has beaten all records. I enclose copy of a letter from Babu Ramnarayan Singh, B.A., B.L., who was a practising pleader at Chattri but has suspended his practice and is now Secretary to the Subdivisional Congress Committee, Chattri. I desire to add my own personal testimony that two Mehtars serving under the Municipality made statements to me during my visit to Chattri in the presence of a large number of persons including the local Sub-Inspector of Police and the Sub-Inspector of Excise bearing on the allegations contained in the letter regarding Mehtars. Influence of indirect nature has been brought to bear on the village people by local officials, particularly on small zamindars for not cutting the palm trees with tapper for getting toddy from them.

*Young India,*  
15th September, 1921."

(11) "Bihar, the land of Janaka and Sita, the land of perhaps the most afflicted and docile people in all India, is a land of sorrow. Bihar is a province which has kept most non-violent. It has shown splendid results in most items of *Non-Co-operation*. Whereas eighteen months ago the *Charkha* and the use of *Khadi* were unknown to Bihar, its villages to-day contain thousands of them and thousands of men and women now habitually wearing *Khadi*. It contains both among its Hindus and Mussalmans probably the most selfless workers throughout India who work silently and without bragging. No one has uttered a whisper about the sincerity

of its leaders. And yet even Bihar has come in for this ruthless interference with peaceful activity.

But it is all for the good of the country. The Bihari will feel all the stronger for the imprisonments, the kicks and the slaps if they are borne ungrudgingly, valiantly and without ill-will. Let the people be tried as to their faith in non-violence, in *Khad*, in temperance, in avoidance of litigation, in self-restraint and self-purification. That would be also our fitness for *Swaraj*.

*Young India,*  
*22nd December, 1921."*



### Section 3.

## CONSTRUCTIVE ACTIVITIES (1925-29)

### (1) "A BIHAR FORECAST:

I take the following from a Bihar correspondent's letter :—

"There was a meeting of the Bihar P.C.C. on 25th January. The majority of members registered themselves as self-spinning members. And the workers from different districts undertook to secure before 31st March next 3000 self-spinning members. The programme for the whole year is to secure at least 13000 self-spinning members. It is expected that sufficient cotton will be collected as a donation for supplying self-spinning members who cannot afford to find their own cotton. During my peregrinations I have noticed that the quality of yarn and *Khadar* has steadily improved and centralisation through the *Khadar Board* has ensured comparatively greater efficiency and accuracy. The following are the production centres with the average monthly output of *Khadar* marked against them:—

Pandol	Rs. 3,000
Garol	Rs. 1,500
Hajipur	Rs. 500

There are three selling depots as follows:—

Muzaffarpur	Rs. 2,500
Hajipur	Rs. 500
Patna	Rs. 2,000

Thus you will observe that the sales balance the production. But this is not all the production, nor all the consumption. There are many spinners who spin to clothe themselves. Though I have no statistics to show the quantity of yarn thus spun and *Khadar* woven, there must be hundreds who are clothing themselves in this manner. The *Gauddi Ashram*

is a model centre for spinning. I was surprised to notice the wonderful way in which the lads aged 12 were working here. They not only card and spin well but also receive yarn from spinners on hire, test the yarn, pay them wages and take the yarn to the weavers. They can do all this work efficiently and methodically. The quality of its *Khadkar* shows clear improvement upon 1922. The *Asram* has the following producing centres:—

Madhubani	Rs. 7,000
Malkachak	Rs. 600
Madhupur	Rs. 500

The following are the sale depots:—

Madhubani	Rs. 1,500
Bhagalpur	Rs. 1,100
Malkachak	Rs. 500
Jamui	Rs. 500

The P.C.C. propose this year to produce *Khadkar* worth at least five lacs of rupees. The present monthly production is Rs. 13,000. If they are to manufacture five lacs, the monthly production must be trebled. Rajendra Babu is enthusiastic about it. 'The natural facilities in Bihar are great. I should not therefore wonder if the programme is carried out. The people here are anxiously looking forward to your visit. If you can come, the work will certainly receive a great push.'

I hope that the other provinces too will lose no time in preparing their programme of work. I should love to go to Bihar as early as I can. But I am not master of my own movements. I go where fate takes me. It is therefore futile for me to make promises in advance.

*Young India,*  
12th February, 1925."

## (2) "FOR BHARAT:

My forthcoming visit to Bengal has raised lively expectations in Bihar and correspondents have already asked me to include their places in my Bihar tour. Instead of sending

these individual replies I venture to inform them hereby that no date for the Bihar tour has as yet been fixed. If my health keeps after the Bengal tour (I say this because I have not yet regained my former vitality after the recent attack of Malaria) I shall endeavour to suit the Bihar friends. But no date can be fixed before the Bengal tour has well advanced. In any case my Bihar friends who want me to visit their places should correspond with Rajendra Babu. He will be in charge of the programme on the same conditions as to days of quiet etc. that I have urged for Bengal.

M. K. Gandhi  
*Young India,*  
 30th April, 1925."

(3) "A VISIT TO JAMSHEDPUR:

(By Gandhi) (Note on it by M.D.)

Ever since his long stay in Bihar in 1917, Gandhiji had been looking forward to a visit to Jamshedpur, the industrial town which owes its existence to the noble enterprise and extraordinary individual genius of the late Jamshedji Tata. But it was left to Mr. Andrews to successfully persuade Gandhiji to visit the place to serve the cause of labour there. But if he went to serve labour at the instance of Mr. Andrews, he stayed there as the guest of Mr. R.D. Tata, to whose conciliatory spirit, let it be admitted, the entire success of the object of the visit was due.

This is no place either to trace the history of the enterprise—a history which takes throughout the character of a romance—or to describe the works round which Gandhiji was kindly shown by Mr. Tata and Mr. Alexander, the Company's manager. Properly told the history would fill a volume and even a cursory inspection of the gigantic works would take at least a week, which Gandhiji could not give himself. Suffice it to say that within the space of twenty years a hamlet which was surrounded by scrub and jungle has been converted into a picturesque site with a town on it of 105,000 souls, that the Company rendered yeoman's services to Government during the War and if they are required in any adequate manner the Company may be able

to produce all the iron and steel, of the kind it produces, now imported from abroad.

The development of the enterprise and the growth of the town, have, however, raised problems which the Company has yet to tackle, and also raised difficulties that attend the rise of any industrial town. The novel enterprise necessitated the importation from various Western countries of "expert" engineers and "expert" workmen who naturally dictated their own terms, with the result that even though in most of the departments there are now Indians who are doing precisely the same work the Europeans do, there is no proportion whatsoever between the pay and the amenities enjoyed by them and the Indians. The anomaly is pressingly visible today, and, (if it is not remedied betimes), might threaten the success of the enterprise in future.

A right step in the direction is the establishment of a Technological Institute which takes in yearly 24 students from all the provinces of India, and trains them for work of the highly technical character necessary in the various departments, and they are intended ultimately to fill the places of European experts now serving under contract. The Company expends about two thousand rupees yearly on each student.

The planning of the steel city necessarily meant the establishment of a modern town and the Company has availed itself of the services of a Town Planning Engineer in the construction of suitable houses and roads, building of water-works and ensuring proper drainage, lighting etc. The sewage of a large part of the town is treated in disposal works on the Activated Sludge Method and finally brought to a spot where it is used to irrigate and fertilise most of the valuable agricultural land in the vicinity. There are schools for children and a well appointed hospital and several dispensaries where not only the employees but people from neighbouring villages are treated free of charge.

That gives a rough idea of what the Company has done. But more remains yet to be done. The grievances of the vast majority of workmen getting small salaries are various and many, besides the grave disparity in salaries. The houses

are limited in number and I have seen cases where there are three to four families living huddled together in a house with only four rooms. Though there are numerous women workers there is not a single lady doctor in the town. 'A Sahib's horse is better and more promptly attended to in the hospital,' I was told by some who had felt the pinch, 'than an ordinary workman.' The complaint may be unfounded, but there it is to show that discontent is there. "There is a Cooperative store," I was told, "which is meant for the benefit of all, high and low, but which exists only for the benefit of the privileged few, and sells even liquor." (As to liquor more later). I shall not go into many other grievances. They point to the necessity of a strong Labour Union, for however much the Company may do by way of welfare work, it would do so only from its own point of view. The union has been there for some years, but it came into a sharp tussle with the Company two years ago, and ever since the Company had hitherto refused to recognise it.

I am glad to say that as a result of consultations between Mr. Tata and Mr. Andrews (who is President of the Union), and Mr. Jawaharlal Nehru who represented his father, a satisfactory reconciliation was brought about. Gandhiji was invited to take part in the consultations and was requested to announce the result at a big mass meeting held on the 9th inst. The result is that the Company not only recognises the Union, but has agreed to bless it and promote it by collecting, if necessary, members' subscriptions from their salaries, and at the request of Mr. Andrews, and seeing the willingness of the General Manager, Mr. Tata has undertaken to recommend to the Directors the reemployment of Mr. Sethi, the Secretary of the Union.

Two things in Gandhiji's speech to the workmen I can not forbear mentioning viz. his reference to Mr. Andrews and to the terms of conciliation. 'Mr. Andrews,' said Gandhiji, 'is if possible more than a blood-brother to me and I can never refuse his request. I do not think I can claim a deeper attachment to anyone than to Mr. Andrews. Everyday we have been coming closer to each other, and we look forward to a day when out of our friendship will

grow the same close friendship and brotherhood between the Englishman and the Indian in India. Whether we shall succeed or not, only God knows; but we do know that all the twenty-four hours of our lives are a conscious effort towards that goal. We are sick of the feuds, raging between man and man, and it is our ambition to wear mankind from the use of brute force and convert it to the use of soul-force for the settlement of disputes.' Speaking of the terms of conciliation he said, 'I have become a labourer because I want to know both your strong and weak points. I do hope you will serve the Company faithfully and, in the manner of working your Union, demonstrate to the world that you deserved the generous concession agreed to by Mr. Tata, that Mr. Andrews deserved it, and you deserved Mr. Andrews. You know that he is not your paid servant. His services are given you for the joy of giving. Let never a day come when he may have to hear from Mr. Tata that the latter regretted the settlement of to-day. I have sought the friendship of the capitalists in order to induce them to regard themselves as trustees for the benefit of the labourers, and that they may take their own food after feeding them. To day capital is afraid of labour and labour soon at capital. I want to replace that relationship by one of mutual trust and respect and I hope you will help me to bring about that consummation.'

At this meeting a purse of Rs. 3000 was presented to Gandhiji for the *All-India Durbhanna Memorial Fund*. There was a meeting of women too, where also a handsome collection was made, including some ornaments. Whilst these things indicate that people do not refuse to respond to appeals for national work, there is not much of a public life in the place. I was told some *Khaddar* was purchased against Gandhiji's coming, but there was not much in evidence, and when Gandhiji after having spoken passionately in Hindi against the curse of drink, said in his English speech that he held the richer classes even more responsible for the prevalence of drink, there was laughter over the reference. Evidently it was a most venial offence, in their opinion, and I am told that thousands of rupees worth of country and foreign liquor

is sold at the Company's shops every month. The argument that the Company has taken charge of these shops in order to minimise the effect of drunkenness among the workmen is specious indeed. The fact is that the Company feels that it is bound to provide these shops as one of the necessary amenities of a modern town. A highly placed official, who visiting the place some years ago, hoped that the fires lighted there might 'not only turn stone into rails, but help as all sound industry does to develop the people among whom it is planted into props and girders of civilization.' I was told the percentage of crime today is very high, and the facilities for the purchase of liquor will make it higher still, making the people not props and girders but sappers and underminers of civilization.

Some friends came to me asking how Congress work may be done in an industrial area like this. I had not the slightest hesitation in telling them: 'Join the Labour Union and strengthen it, and do Congress work by means of the Union viz. by creating an opinion in favour of having as members none but those who wear *Khadḍar* and abstain from drink.' That is how the people have to help themselves. But the Company would earn the lasting gratitude of its poorer staff if it takes a distinct step forward by patronising *Khadḍar* and abolishing the liquor shops.

Young India,  
26th August, 1923."

#### (4) "KHADDAR IN BIHAR:

A friend writes from Purulia:

'As you are expected to come to Purulia, all the people are buying *Khadḍar* just to wear it during your stay. Your visit has reminded some of these men of their promise to use *Khadḍar*, and some are buying it just to escape public criticism. Now, if a man uses foreign cloth as a rule, but only wears *Khadḍar* on certain occasions, he is a hypocrite. And if your visit increases the number of such men, what is the use? Hypocrites never help the self-government of any country. There was a time when I deemed it a pleasure to present

*Khaddar* garments on marriage ceremonies. But I found by experience that it was almost impossible to get pure *Khaddar* locally. What is generally brought as such, is made in Japan or in Indian mills, and what I have bought from *Souray Ashram* has warp made of mill yarn.'

This letter raises two important points. One is whether there is any use in occasional use of *Khaddar*? On the principle that something is better than nothing even an occasional use of *Khaddar* is to be encouraged. We want to sell home-made, home-woven, and home-spun cloth. Any demand for such cloth is, therefore, welcome and those who make occasional use are likely to make even habitual use of *Khaddar*. I would, therefore, encourage its use on every occasion. Nor can I endorse the remark that those who wear *Khaddar* on particular occasions are necessarily hypocrites. If a man pretends to be what he is not, he is a hypocrite, not one who makes no such pretence. One who drinks secretly and makes his neighbour believe that he is a teetotaler is a hypocrite to be shunned. A man who makes no secret of his habit of drinking, but omits drinking in society, or out of regard for his friends, is not only not a hypocrite, but a sensible and considerate man, and there is every hope of his being weaned from his habit. If, therefore, the people of Purulia, who are reported to be buying *Khaddar* in view of my forth-coming visit are doing so in order to induce the belief in me that they have never worn any other cloth, they are undoubtedly hypocrites. But I do not believe that they are buying *Khaddar* with any such unholy design. It is no secret to me that a vast number of people have not yet given up the habit of using mill-made cloth, foreign or indigenous. But they do not mind using *Khaddar* occasionally, and, since it has now become the Congress dress, people who attend Congress functions even occasionally, consider it proper to wear *Khaddar*. Whilst, therefore, I should like all those in Bihar who are buying *Khaddar* to enable them to appear at Congress functions during my tour, to wear it habitually, I am unable to condemn its use for the occasion of my tour. It is some gain, be it ever so small, that the surplus



*Khaddar* stock in Bihar will be used up, and so much money freed for manufacture of more *Khaddar*.

The second point raised by the correspondent is serious. The only way to avoid fraudulent imitations is for purchasers to ensure the purity of their purchases. Congress organisations, or *Khaddar* organisations, can do a great deal to prevent, or, at any rate, to check the evil. The correspondent states *Khaddar* stores should be run by the Congress in all principal centres. Some such thing has been attempted, but it is a matter of finance and organisation. The *All-India Spinners' Association* is being conceived for the purpose of dealing with such evils. Meanwhile I would urge writers like my correspondent not to give up *Khaddar* for want of facility. It is because the successful organising of *Khaddar* and the spinning wheel means the evoking of all that is best in us that I often say that the adoption of the spinning wheel will lead to *Swaraj*.

*Young India,*  
*3rd September, 1925."*

(3) "BIHAR NOTES:

The tour in Bihar commenced with my attending the *Bihar Provincial Conference* at Purulia. The chief business of the *Conference* was to pass a recommendatory resolution endorsing the proposed change in the spinning franchise. The President's speech was delivered in English. I wish Moulvi Zubair had delivered it in Hindustani. I know that half the audience did not understand this otherwise admirable speech. There was, too, the *Hindu Sabha* and the next day the *Khilafat Conference* in the same pandal. It was a most pleasing thing for me to find all the Presidents respecting my wish not to speak at any of the conferences. I have grown weary of speaking. I have nothing new to say. I travel because I fancy that the masses want to meet me. I certainly want to meet them. I deliver my simple message to them in a few words and they and I are satisfied. It penetrates the mass mind slowly but surely.

Annexed to the *Conference* was a well-arranged *Industrial Exhibition*. You saw there the undoubted evolution of *Khadai*. There was the spinning competition and the distribution of prizes. Chaman of the *Khadai Pratisthan* carried the first prize which consisted of a gold medal. A little girl six years old was also a prize-winner. Her spinning was not bad at all. She carried the prize in that she was only six years and yet could steadily spin for the competition. The lantern-slide lecture on *Khadai* which Khitish Babu of the *Khadai Pratisthan* delivered to an appreciative audience was another feature.

The usual addresses and *puise* were there. The *puise* was intended for the *All-India Deshbandhu Memorial Fund*. There were collections too on the spot both at men's and women's meetings. The collection at the latter was as usual larger.

I was taken too to a village called Golunda, a Co-operative centre where spinning is being tried. It is an interesting experiment and if it is carried out scientifically it is bound to succeed and yield startling results.

Purulia has an old *Lepet Asylum* managed entirely by the *London Missionary Society*. I saw the first *Lepet Asylum* at Cuttack. But there it was a hurried visit. I was able only to see the lepers and the Superintendent. I had no time to see the appointments. At Purulia I was able to see the quarters and understand the working of the institution. In both the places the Superintendents and their wives have become devoted friends of the lepers. There was no unhappiness in the faces of the inmates. They were able to forget their distress through the loving care of their Superintendents. I was told at Purulia that leprosy was brought under subjection by means of oil injections, especially in the initial stages. The Superintendent also told me that the cases that looked horrible—burnt up skin or burnt toes and fingers—were not contagious at all. In such cases the disease had done its work. There was no contagion and no cure. The contagious cases were those which neither the public nor the patient recognised as such. These are the cases that admit of complete cure through injections. It is a matter of

humiliation for us that the very necessary and humane work of looking after this portion of distressed humanity should be taken up solely by Christian foreigners. All honour to them, but what of us? The reader will be sorry to learn that leprosy is on the increase. The general reason assigned was unchaste living and wrong dieting.

Unlike other parts of Bihar, Purulia and the surrounding country is a predominantly Bengali-speaking tract. It has a comparatively better and cooler climate than Calcutta. The Bengalis use Purulia as a health resort. Deshabandhu's father built a beautiful home in Purulia. I was put up in this house. I felt sad having to be in Deshabandhu's house when he was no more. His father's and his mother's *saradis* were in this house. They lie in a corner. A simple unpretentious stone platform marks the spot where their ashes lie buried. Yonder was a dilapidated building which was built by one of Deshabandhu's sisters which she was conducting as a *Widow's Home*. With her premature death the *Home* died a natural death. Yet another dilapidated building was pointed out to me as a block of rooms which were built for housing poor people. The whole surroundings seemed to be in keeping with the mystic charity of this family of philanthropists. It was therefore a privilege for me to be asked to unveil Deshabandhu's portraits and uncover two plates directing the stranger to a *Deshabandhu Arcus* and a *Deshabandhu Road*.

I must deal with my entry into the territories inhabited by the Ho's, the Mundas and the other aboriginal tribes among whom a silent reform movement is going on.

M. K. Gandhi

*Young India,*

24th September, 1925"

# "BRIEF NOTES:

*With Aborigines:* From Chakradharpur to Chaibasa is a pleasant motor ride over a very good road. It was at Chaibasa that I made the acquaintance of the 'Ho' tribe—a most interesting body of men and women, simple as children,

with a faith that it is not easy to shake. Many of them have taken to the *Charaka* and *Khadar*. Congress workers began the work of reformation among them in 1921. Many have given up eating carrion and some have even taken to vegetarianism. The Mundas are another tribe whom I met at Khunti on my way to Ranchi. The scope for work in their midst is inexhaustible. Christian missionaries have been doing valuable service for generations but in my humble opinion their work suffers because at the end of it they expect conversion of these simple people to Christianity. I had the pleasure of seeing some of their schools in these places. It was all pleasing, but I could see the coming conflict between the missionaries and the *Hindu* workers. The latter have no difficulty in making their service commendable to the Ho's, the Mundas and the others. How very nice it would be if the missionaries rendered humanitarian service without the ulterior aim of conversion! But I must not reiterate the remarks I made before the *Missionary Conference* and other Christian bodies in Calcutta. I know that such a revolutionary change in Christian endeavour as I am advocating can not come through any advice, especially from an outsider, however well-meant it may be; it can only come either out of a definite individual conviction or out of some great mass movement among Christians themselves. Among these tribes there is quite a colony of them called *Baktas*, literally meaning devotees. They are believers in *Khadar*. Men as well as women ply the *Charaka* regularly. They wear *Khadar* woven by themselves. Many of them had walked miles with their *Charakas* on their shoulders. I saw nearly four hundred of them all plying their *Charakas* most assiduously at the meeting I had the privilege of addressing. They have their own *Bhajans* which they sing in chorus.

*In Chhota Nagpur:* Almost the whole of my travelling in Chhota Nagpur was in motor cars, but the roads are all good and the scenery around magnificent. From Chaibasa we had to retrace our steps to Chakradharpur and from there we motored to Ranchi, halting at Khunti and one or two other places. Just before reaching Ranchi at 7 o'clock in the evening a meeting of ladies had been arranged. I do

not think that either the organisers or the ladies had bargained for my appeal for the *Deshabandhu Memorial Fund*. But as I hardly ever fail to make that appeal when I address public meetings, I made it at this meeting also. The vast majority were Bengalis. Many being unprepared had no money with them. These therefore parted with their ornaments some of which were heavy things. It did one's soul good to see those sisters parting with their ornaments in order to honour the memory of one they loved. Needless to say, I make it perfectly clear at these meetings that the whole of the gifts would be utilised for spreading the *Charkha* and *Khadir*.

In Ranchi I was taken to Galkunda, a little village where an experiment in hand-spinning is being made under the aegis of a Co-operative Society by Babu Girishchandra Majumdar, who is a *Khadir* enthusiast. He expects spinning to become a thorough success. The experiment has just begun. If organising is properly done and the spinning wheels fulfil the standard requirements, there should be no difficulty about the *Charkha* becoming the success it has been elsewhere.

There were two theatrical performances given at Ranchi by Amateur Companies for the purpose of *Deshabandhu Memorial Fund*. One was given by Bengalis and the other by Biharis. As they were given by amateurs I had no difficulty in accepting their invitations but I was severely disappointed over the Bengali performance. I could see little difference between the performances of professionals and this Amateur Company. There was complete aping of professionals. The dresses were all made of foreign material. The colouring of faces was also resorted to whereas I had expected that these performances would be subdued and that there would be at least *Khadir* used for dress material. So when I undertook to go to the Bihari Amateurs' play I made the condition that if they wanted me to see their play they should have their dresses made of *Khadir* and that not merely for the occasion but for all their performances. To my agreeable surprise, the condition was readily accepted. There were only a few hours left for making all that change, but they did it and the manager made the announcement of the

promise given to me and prayed for God's help that they might be able to fulfil the promise. What the Bibbais' play lost in tinsel effect it gained, in my opinion, in dignity by the change adopted. I commend this very desirable change to all amateur theatrical Companies. Indeed, even the professionals who have any patriotic instinct can easily make this change and thus contribute, though ever so little, to the economic uplift of the teeming millions of India.

I must omit several interesting items including a very pleasing discussion on *Khadai* with Messrs N.K. Roy and S.K. Rao of the Department of Industries and a visit to the *Bahadurpuri Ashram* which owes its existence to the munificence of the Maharajah of Kasimbar. From Ranchi we motored to Hazaribagh where in addition to the usual appointments I was called upon to address the students of St. Columba's Missionary College, a very old institution. I spoke to the students on social service and endeavoured to show that it was impossible without character and that such service on a large scale in India was only possible through penetration into the villages and that it had to be its own reward for it brought no excitement, no advertisement and had often to be done under most trying circumstances and in the teeth of superstition and ignorance. I endeavoured to show that the best form that social service could take in India was through the spinning wheel and *Khadai*, because it brought young men in touch with the villagers, it enabled them to put a few coppers every day into the pockets of the villagers and created an indissoluble bond between the latter and themselves, and it helped them to know their Maker because the selfless service of the poor was the service of God.

#### KHUDA BOX LIBRARY:

From Hazaribagh with a few stoppages on the motor road to Gaya we went to Patna where the main work was the activity of the *All-India Congress Committee* and the inauguration of the *All-India Spicers' Association*. It was at Patna that I discovered my health would break down under the incessant fatigue of travelling. The shouts of the crowd had

almost proved unbearable as we were nearing Gaya where I was obliged even to stuff my ears to prevent the shouts making me almost to swoon. Rajendra Babu had therefore taken elaborate precautions to prevent noisy demonstrations of blind but well-meant affection and he very kindly revised and cut down my programme. I had therefore comparative rest at Patna. I was able to fulfil the long cherished desire of visiting the *Khuda Bux Oriental Library*. I had heard much about it. But I had never realised that it had the rich treasures I was privileged to see. Its devoted founder Khan Bahadur Khuda Bux who was a *Fakir* made it a labour of love to collect even from abroad many ancient and rare Arabic and Persian books. The decorations in some of the hand-written copies of Koran that I saw were of great beauty. The unknown artists must have given years of patient labour to the creation. Every page of the decorated edition of the *Shahnamah* is a work of art—a veritable feast for the eyes. I understand that the literary value of some of the manuscripts treasured in this library are no less great. All honour to the founder for his great gift to the nation.

#### A GOVERNMENT EXPERIMENT;

The other interesting thing I was able to see in Patna was the workshop conducted by the Department of Industries. Mr. Rao is the Superintendent. The workshop itself is a modern building, well-lighted, well-ventilated, well-planned and scrupulously clean. Handloom weaving and toy-making which is the speciality of Patna are the features of this workshop. Improved looms for weaving tapes and bedstead-straps are commendable. I would, however, not help feeling that in this admirable workshop, the central thing the spinning wheel was wanting. Improved toy-making will certainly give better wages to the makers of toys and it has therefore properly a place in a workshop in a city like Patna. An Indian work-shop is also incomplete without hand-loom weaving. But no national department of industries can be considered to be at all complete that takes no note of hand-spinning and therefore of millions of villagers who are at present without a supplementary industry. The difficulties that were suggested to me in making hand-spinning a success were mainly two:

(1) Hand-spun yarn can never compete with mill-spun yarn because it has never yet been found to be as strong as mill-spun yarn.

(2) The output of the spinning wheels is too small to be profitable.

The experience of those who have worn *Khadar* for years is that where it is made of good hand-spun yarn it is any day more durable than the best mill-spun cloth of the same count. For instance some of my Andhra friends have shown me their *dhotis* which have lasted four years and upwards against mill-spun *dhotis* which wear out inside of a year. But my point is not that hand-spun is more durable, but that hand-spinning being the only possible supplementary industry for the peasantry of India, which means 85 per cent of its population, all our arrangements regarding clothing should be fashioned on the understanding that it must be supplied from hand-spun yarn. Thus our energy should be concentrated not on finding out the best and the cheapest yarn, no matter where and how spun, but on finding out the cheapest and the best hand-spun yarn. If any proposition is sound all the industrial departments of the nation should revolve round the *Charkas* as the centre. The department of industries, therefore, would make improvements in the spinning wheels so as to increase the output. They would buy nothing but hand-spun yarn, so that hand-spinning is automatically stimulated. They would devise means of utilising every quality of hand-spun yarn obtainable. They would issue prizes for the finest hand-spun yarn. They would explore all possible fields for getting good hand-spun yarn. This does not mean less encouragement to hand-weaving. It simply means adding to the encouragement of hand-weaving and spinning and thereby serving those most in need of help.

But it has been objected that hand-spinning is not profitable. But surely it is profitable for those who have many an idle hour at their disposal and to whose scanty income even a pice is a welcome addition. The whole of the *Charkas* programme falls to pieces if millions of peasants are not living in enforced idleness for at least four months in the year. Wherever *Khadar* workers are doing their labour of



low it has become not only profitable but a blessing to villagers to have men who would buy their yarn. Those whose income does not exceed five to six rupees per month and have time at their disposal would gladly take in work that brings them an addition of two rupees per month.

#### MALKACHAK AND OTHER CENTRES:

I have before me a report of work done by a band of volunteers in several parts of Bihar. I visited their centre at Malkachak after my visit to the industrial workshop. The place is about twelve miles from Patna. In Malkachak alone with a population of about a thousand there are four hundred wheels going and there are thirty weavers weaving hand-spun yarn. I saw some of the sisters plying their wheels. They were indifferently constructed. Yet the spinners seemed to be happy with them. They get two rupees per month on an average. An addition of eight hundred rupees per month in a village containing one thousand souls is surely a big income any day. I do not count the wages earned by the weavers at the rate of fifteen rupees per month. That may not be a new addition. These workers in addition to organising spinning are also giving the village folk such medical relief as is possible with their limited resources and still more limited medical knowledge. The report of their work which was started in 1921 mentions that they are serving six centres viz. Madhubani, Kapesla, Shakri, Madhegar and Pupri besides Malkachak. They wove in 1922, Rs. 62,000 worth of *Khadar*, in 1923, 84,000, in 1924, 63,000. And they have already woven one lac worth during the nine months of 1925. They wove less in 1924 because of want of cotton. Their capacity for extension, the report says, is almost unlimited, given a regular supply of cotton and a market insured for the disposal of their wares. They believe that almost every village in the neighbourhood would welcome the presence of these workers. The quality of *Khadar* produced by them is excellent and is by no means all of the coarsest variety. Some of it is even exceedingly fine. They pay four annas per seer of 40 tolas for spinning ten counts and 2½ annas per yard of 45 inches width for weaving. They have 28 workers. The upkeep of these depots including

food and travelling amounts to Rs. 25 per month per worker on an average. These depots are not at a loss. They organise their own sales. The quality of yarn they receive shows a steady improvement from month to month. I invite the department of industries and the public in general to study the condition of these villages and verify the facts given above for themselves. These workers are responsible for 7,000 wheels and 250 looms weaving hand-spun yarn in the villages.

The condition of Bihar is in no way extraordinary. It is more or less the same in many parts of Bengal, Andhra, Tamil land and the United Provinces. I have mentioned these provinces because the condition of those who have taken up spinning can be studied there. At the present moment, most of the other Provinces would show the same state of things. China for instance where the people are living from hand to mouth only awaits skilled workers and efficient organisation. Rajputana, in spite of its millionaires, is again a tract where the art of spinning is still alive and where the people are extremely poor. If only the Rajahs and the Maharajahs will lend their hearty support to the movement, encourage Khaddar wear in their States and remove the handicap on Khadi wherever it exists this land of chronic droughts will without any great outlay of capital and without any fuss, have lace of rupees per year for its poor people.

M. K. Gandhi

*Young India,*

*24 October, 1925."*

#### "BIHAR NOTES.

#### HINDU-MUSLIM QUESTION:

From Patna we went to Bhagalpur. At Bhagalpur there was a very great public meeting at which I was obliged to make a somewhat lengthy reference to the Hindu-Muslim question. Though my influence over those who are agitating the question is gone, they continue to discuss with me the various problems arising from it. I felt, therefore, that I should redeclare my views for what they might be worth.

Apart from merits I must confess, that I have not liked this constant reference to the Government by both the parties on matters, which they by mutual settlement or appeal to the sword can adjust. I, therefore, told the audience that since neither party was prepared to compromise and each was afraid of the other, the best way would be without seeking the intervention of the Government to settle the matters in dispute by the method of the *Lathi*. Retreat out of fear was cowardice and cowardice would not hasten a settlement or the advent of non-violence. Cowardice was a species of violence which it was the most difficult to overcome. One could hope to persuade a violently inclined person to shed his violence and take up the superior force of non-violence, but since cowardice was a negation of all force, it was impossible to teach a mouse non-violence in respect of a cat. He would simply not understand what non-violence could be, because he had not the capacity for violence against the cat. Would it not be a mockery to ask a blind man not to look at ugly things? Maulana Shaukat Ali and I were at Bettiah in 1921. The people of a village near Bettiah told me, that they had run away whilst the police were looting their houses and molesting their women-folk. When they said that they had run away because I had told them to be non-violent, I hung my head in shame. I assured them that such was not the meaning of my non-violence. I expected them to intercept the mightiest power that might be in the act of harming those who were under their protection, and draw without retaliation all harm upon their own heads even to the point of death, but never to run away from the storm centre. It was mainly enough to defend one's property, honour or religion at the point of sword. It was manlier and nobler to defend them without seeking to injure the wrong-doer. But it was unmanly, unnatural and dishonourable to forsake the post of duty and in order to save one's skin to leave property, honour or religion to the mercy of the wrong-doer. I could see my way of successfully delivering the message of *Ahimsa* to those who knew how to die, not to those who were afraid of death. I told the audience, further, that those like me who deliberately did not want to fight and

were powerless to effect a settlement might follow the example of those Musalmans, who during the time of the first four Caliphs sought the refuge of the cave when brothers began to fight one against the other. The mountain cave in those days was a practical impossibility but they could retire to the cave which each of us carried within himself. But such could be only those who had mutual regard for another's religion and customs.

#### FOLLY OF EXCOMMUNICATION:

Then there was a *Provincial Marwadi Sammelan* where I spoke on the question of social boycott and on the crying need of social reform. I told the Marwadi friends, that excommunication was a lawful weapon in the hands only of those who deserved to be classed as *Mahajans*, which meant pure men who were real representatives of their respective groups or castes and who declared excommunication not from personal spite but from the selfless motive of conserving the interest of fellow-beings. It was an immoral abuse of power to put under the ban of excommunication a person who for the sake of learning or legitimate gain crossed the waters or who for the sake of obtaining a suitable match for his son or daughter went outside his sub-caste or who dared to remarry his widowed daughter of tender age. If *Varanashram* which had a useful and proper place in the Hindu social system was to be rescued from destruction, it was high time that the innumerable subdivisions were fused into one. There was, for instance, no reason why a *Marwadi Brahmin* or *Vaishya* should not seek marriage relations with a Bengalee Brahmin or *Vaishya*. The *Mahajans* to be truly great will have to encourage rather than suppress tendencies towards fusion.

If excommunication was ever deserved nowadays, it was deserved by those who gave away their daughters in marriage before they were full-grown, at least before they were sixteen, and if secret immortality was to be discountenanced, it was the duty of parents of child widows to encourage their re-marriage.

# THE PANDAS:

From Bhagalpur we motored to Banka where there was a district conference presided over by Maulana Shafi Sahib. There was nothing noteworthy here except for the huge and embarrassing crowds through which I passed with difficulty with my bruised toe. We went thence to Deoghar otherwise known as Vaidyanath Dham. This is not only a famous place of pilgrimage but also a health resort beautifully situated and surrounded by hills. This is a favourite place with the Bengalers. Unlike as in other places of pilgrimage I found here the *Pandas* i.e. the priests in charge of the shrines to be a fairly cultured body of men. The majority of volunteers were smart *Panda* youths who rendered great assistance, I was told, to the pilgrims. There are several educated men amongst them, one being even a High Court pleader. I had the pleasure too of a visit from the elderly *Pandas*. They wanted me to tell them what they should do to serve the people and when I told them that they should serve the pilgrims instead of seeking to profiteer at their expense, and endeavour to make the places of pilgrimage really holy places by themselves leading pure and restrained lives, they readily agreed and there seemed to me to be a ring of sincerity about their assent to my proposals and a humble recognition of the existence of the evils I had ventured to point out. I was agreeably surprised to discover that the great temple was open to the so-called untouchables. The usual women's meeting was arranged in the spacious temple compound just opposite the shrine. The order kept by the *Panda* volunteers wherever I went in Deoghar was certainly much better than I have observed elsewhere.

## VIRTUE OF SUFFERING:

The public meeting was so well-organised as to ensure perfect quiet. The public address made pointed reference to terrible sufferings that the people of this district underwent in 1921-22. It should be noted here that this is the district called Santhal Parganas. It is a Non-regulation part of Bihar. The Commissioner's will is therefore the law of the land. The address also referred to the fact that whereas during 1921 and 1922 the drink habit had all but disappear-

ed, it was again making headway amongst the Santhals. The possibilities of *Khadar* were stated to be very great. In my reply I pointed out that no nation had ever come to its own without much suffering. I, therefore, did not mind the sufferings that the people underwent in 1921-22. Only suffering to be beneficial must be voluntary and must be enjoyed. When it came, such suffering left the sufferer stronger and happier at the end of it. I was, therefore, grieved to discover that the suffering in the district had caused demoralization amongst the people. It meant that all the suffering was not voluntary. It was up to the workers to set an example in pure and voluntary sufferings. There should be persistent agitation amongst Santhals against the drink habit and the *Charkha* work should be systematically organized.

#### TWO PICTURES:

There was, too, a separate presentation of an address by the Municipality. I take note of this event especially for the exceedingly tasteful but simple arrangements made for the presentation in the open air. The attendance was evidently regulated by tickets and was confined to so few that the audience could have been easily accommodated in any commodious building. But the Commissioners chose to erect a little pandal decorated with foliage tastefully arranged in the midst of beautiful natural scenery. I could not therefore help recalling in my reply to the address of the Municipality the dirty state of the road leading to the temple and the dilapidation surrounding it. I have visited almost all the places of pilgrimage in India, and everywhere the condition in and about the temple is deplorable—disorder, dirt, din and stench. All these are probably less marked in Doober than elsewhere. But all the same the contrast between the temple surroundings and the place where the address was presented was painful. If the Municipality, the *Ponds* and the pilgrims combine together they could make the temple and its precincts beautiful, sweet-smelling and uplifting as they ought to be. If honest and proper management could be assured, I had no doubt, I told them, that the rich pilgrims would gladly pay for the comfort that they would get at such holy places.

6902





*Mahatma Gandhi at Chhabasa in 1923 with Dr. Rajendra Prasad  
and some local leaders.*



# USELESS AND UGLY:

From Dewghar we proceeded to Kharagdeha which is reached through Giridih from where it is a motor ride of 26 miles. At this place the programme began with a meeting of ladies. Hitherto I have restrained myself from criticising the heavily ornamental decoration of some of my fair audiences, oppressive though it has often appeared to me. But the bangled arms from wrist practically to elbow, the huge thick nose-rings with about a three inch diameter which could with difficulty be suspended from two holes proved beyond endurance, and I gently remarked that this heavy ornamentation added nothing to the beauty of person, caused much discomfort, must often lead to disease and was, I could plainly see, a repository of dirt. I had never seen so much ornamentation anywhere else. Heavier articles I have seen as for instance the unbearable heavy anklebells,—I cannot call them rings—of Kathiawad ladies, but never so much body space covered over with so many bangles and what-nots. I was told that these huge nose-rings often resulted in cutting the delicate nasal membranes. I was nervous about the effect my very straight remarks would produce upon my gentle audience. I was therefore considerably relieved when at the end of my speech and in response to my appeal for *Deshabandhu Memorial Fund* they crowded round me and gave liberally from their purses. I took care to drive my point home to every donor individually and asked her to give up a large part of her superfluous ornaments. The ladies received my remarks with a gracious smile and some of them even gave me a part of these ornaments. I do not know whether the quality and the quantity of adornment has anything to do with the development of character. That it has something to do with the intellect can be proved from innumerable instances. That it has connection with culture as distinguished from character is also obvious. But as I put character before even culture, I wonder whether I would be always right in making use, for advocating reform in the art of decoration, of the privilege I enjoy of addressing thousands of women in all the different parts of India. Be that as it may, I would urge upon the parents and

husbands of these simple folk, on grounds of economy and health, the necessity of inducing among them a considerable reduction in these articles of personal furniture.

#### MATHURAS:

It was at this place that I made the acquaintance of *Matharus*, otherwise known as *Matharis*, a body of *Vaisnavas* who, generations ago, are supposed to have migrated from Mathura and the surrounding country and settled in Bihar. They are fairly well-to-do and enterprising. Their chief occupation is commerce. Some of them are staunch reformers. They have taken to *Khaddar* and appreciate its advantages for the poor people. Many of them have given up meat and drink which they used to take before. In their address they stated that they understood the movement of Non-Co-operation as purely one of self-purification, and that it had revolutionized their inner life. They had little or no part in politics but they are intent upon making all kinds of reforms in their own little community. This moral effect of Non-Co-operation upon so many people all over India is perhaps its most *enduring* result. It is fraught with consequences of which we can have as yet but little notion. Similar reforms were reported to me as having taken place also among the Santhals, many of whom have become free from having been habitual drunkards, complete teetotallers. That movement among them received a check when picketing was withdrawn, but it is again reviving without the element of violence which had crept into the movement in 1921. It will be the saving of the simple but ignorant races like the Santhals if they can be weaned from the drink habit.

M. K. Gandhi."

#### "BIHAR NOTES:

##### FUNCTION OF LOCAL BOARD MEMBERS:

At Giridih the address presented to me contained interesting references and there was, also, as in Chaibasa, an address from the *Gorakha Committee*. The Local Board address referred to the bad condition of the roads under its charge.

The justification given was shortage of funds. I had no hesitation in replying that shortage of funds was no excuse for keeping the roads in bad repair when Congressmen manned Local Boards. After all roads were national property, Congressmen were national servants and when by entering Local Boards they obtained charge of roads they were expected to keep them in good repair whether there were funds or not. They might put up on every good point a valiant fight with the Government but their constructive work should in no way be allowed to be neglected. If they found that they could not properly discharge their trust they must resign. Want of funds was no cause for resignation because that could be made up for by voluntary effort. Let the members of such boards take up the pick-axe and the shovel, gird up their loins and themselves work at the roads and call a party of volunteers to assist them. They will earn the blessings of the public as also of the dumb cattle and command the respect of the superior authority. Indeed in all municipal work everywhere a large part of it is done by the councillors unofficially and with the voluntary support of the public. The late Mr. Joseph Chamberlain turned Birmingham into a clean city studded with statues and other decorations, not merely through the paid service of the Corporation but by the voluntary support, pecuniary and other, of its citizens. The Municipality of Glasgow dealt with its plague epidemic in a summary and exemplary fashion only because the members of the corporation received the willing and unstinted support of its citizens. The Municipality of Johannesburg, within my own experience, dealt with similar trouble in the same summary manner. It counted no cost too great for the eradication of plague, burnt down its market buildings and its location and had behind it the resources of its determined citizens. I told my audience that therefore I was asking for nothing heroic of the Local Board members by asking them to do the road repair themselves with the assistance of Congress volunteers if they had not enough funds. If we captured Municipalities and Local Boards we must be able to give a good account of ourselves in all the constructive work that was entrusted to our charge under statutory authority.

### Cow Protection:

The Committee of the Giridih Goshala said in its address that it had an annual income of nine thousand rupees in donations and income of only two thousand rupees from milk etc. The reader will recall that it is the same tale as that of Chaibasa. Much cry but little wool. An ideal Goshala would supply the city of its domicile with cheap and wholesome milk from cattle of its own keeping and cheap and lasting foot-wear not out of slaughtered hide but out of the hide of dead cattle. Such a Goshala will not be on one or two acres of ground in the heart of a city or in its immediate neighbourhood but it would have at some distance, but within easy reach, fifty to a hundred acres of ground where a modern dairy and a modern tannery would be conducted on strictly business but national lines. Thus there would be no profits and no dividends to be paid and there would be also no loss incurred. In the long run such institutions dotted all over India would be a triumph of Hinduism and would be proof of Hindu earnestness about cow, that is, cattle protection and it would provide decent employment for thousands of men including educated men; for both dairy and tannery work require expert scientific knowledge. Not Denmark but India should be a model State for the finest dairy experiments and India should not to her shame have to export nine crores worth of dead cattle hide annually and for her own consumption use slaughtered cattle hide. If such a state of things is a shame for India it is a greater shame for Hindus. I wish that all the Goshala Committees will take to heart the remarks I made in reply to the Giridih address and make their Goshalas into ideal dairies and tanneries and a refuge for all worn out and maimed cattle.

### Who SHOULD SPIN?

A third interesting reference in the Giridih address was to wool-spinning by its labourers. Giridih has several mica mines. It has therefore many labourers working in those mines. These labourers get naturally a higher wage than they can possibly get from spinning and they are therefore not

spinning at all. As a matter of fact there need have been no such apologetic reference as was made in the address. The readers of *Young India* know that I have never suggested that those who are more lucratively employed should give up their lucrative employment and prefer handspinning. I have said repeatedly that those only are expected and should be induced to spin who have no other paying employment and that too only during the hours of unemployment. The whole theory of handspinning is based upon the assumption that there are millions of men and women in this land who are idle for at least four months in the year for want of some employment. There are only therefore two classes of people who are expected to spin, those who would spin for hire, whom I have already mentioned, and the thinking part of India who should spin, for sacrifice by way of example and in order to cheapen *Khadkar*. But whilst I could understand labourers not spinning, I could not understand their not wearing *Khadkar*. There was no excuse for a single person in the vast audience not to wear *Khadkar*. Giridih can produce and manufacture its own yarn and weave its own *Khadkar* without any difficulty, and in any case can get all its supply of *Khadkar* readymade and comparatively cheap from the other parts of Bihar. But I notice that whilst these addresses admit shortcomings about *Khadkar* and the *Charaka*, they are mentioned, I fear, not as an earnest of reform in the immediate future but by way of consolation for continuing the same state of things. A confession is good only when it is intended to be followed up by a retracting; it is worse than useless when it is used to harden oneself against a change. I hope that the confessions made in the many addresses presented to me will be precursors of a definite change.

#### NATIONAL SCHOOLS:

From Giridih we came to Madhupur. There I was called upon to perform the opening ceremony of its new elegant-looking little Town Hall. In performing the opening ceremony and in congratulating the Municipality on possessing its own abode I expressed the hope that the Municipality would make Madhupur a beauty-spot worthy of the climate

and natural surroundings it possessed. The difficulties in the way of improving big cities like Calcutta and Bombay were very great. But in little places like Madhupur, if Municipalities had a very small income they had also no difficulty to face in keeping their areas spotlessly clean and free from diseases. I visited too the national school which Madhupur boasts. The head-master in the address which he read drew a gloomy picture of the prospects before him,—decreasing attendance and decreasing pecuniary support from the people. He mentioned also that some parents withdrew their boys because hand-spinning was compulsory. The address asked me to point the way out of the difficulties mentioned. I replied that if the teachers believed in their mission they need not be disappointed. Ups and downs in all new institutions were their natural lot. Their difficulties therefore were the teachers' testing time. Those convictions only could be described as stable which would stand the stress of storms. The teachers should therefore count no sacrifice too great if they believed that they had a message to deliver to their surroundings through their schools. They would then remain unconcerned whether there was only one boy or there were one hundred in the school provided it was perfectly clear to them that they had done their best for the school and that it was not their shortcomings that estranged the parents and the boys but that the very principle for which they stood was repugnant to them. If they had faith in hand-spinning they would not mind the parents withdrawing their children from the school. If they had retained spinning only because it was a fashion, or because the Congress resolution required it, and not because they had faith in it, they need not hesitate then to do away with spinning and retain the goodwill of the people. Time has arrived when national teachers have to make definite choice for themselves, because, when new changes are made there are always some people who resent one or all of them. It is only the teacher with faith in himself and his cause who could resist opposition to the changes which he considers to be necessary and which alone perhaps justify the existence of his new enterprise.

## MISCELLANEOUS:

From Madhupur we proceeded to the Purnea District, which meant a new surrounding and a new country. For, Purnea District is on the northern bank of the Ganges, and it lies to the north-east. All that district is really the Himalayan *terai*. The climate and the people are almost like those of Champaran. We crossed from Sakrigali Ghat to Maniari Ghat, a voyage of about two hours duration. We reached Maniari early in the morning. The people of this place presented a purse for the *Deekhabandita Memorial*. We went from Maniari by train to Katihar junction where there were the usual public meetings. The next day we went to Kishanganj where also there were the usual meetings and a purse. Kishanganj contains a large Marwadi population. They had made a good collection. A deputation came to me complaining that although they were ready and willing to wear *Khadar* they could not get any in Kishanganj. They said that the whole of the cloth trade was in the hands of the Marwadi merchants who sold only foreign cloth, because the deputation said, the Marwadi merchants told them it paid them best. I told the deputation, however, that whilst I would gladly speak to the Marwadi friends, their excuse was really inadmissible, because if there was a large demand for *Khadar* in Kishanganj they could open a co-operative store themselves. It was no use blaming the Marwadi merchants who were after all in Kishanganj for their business. It was for those like the deputation who believed in *Khadar* to set the fashion, go to some trouble in stocking it, and then induce Marwadi friends to take it up also. This, however, I saw, they were not prepared to do. I told them too, that if they guaranteed a minimum sale I would undertake to persuade Rajendra Babu to open a *Khadar* depot in Kishanganj. This they were not prepared to risk. I spoke to the leading Marwadi merchants who told me that as a matter of fact for some time some Marwadis did have some *Khadar* in their stores, but there was no great demand for it. And they admitted that there was no special effort made by the Marwadi merchants to push *Khadar* before the public.

## CONFUSION:

From Kishanganj we went to Araria, and from Araria to Forbesgunj, the north-eastern extreme point of Bihar near which commences the Nepal border, and from where I was told on a clear day one could see the magnificent snowy range of the Himalayas. Before we reached Forbesgunj I was inclined to congratulate Rajendra Babu and his band of workers upon the excellent control they had obtained upon the people in that, unlike as on previous occasions, the vast crowds of people were orderly, noiseless and exercised exemplary self-restraint by refraining from besieging me to touch my feet. I was, however, disillusioned at Forbesgunj; because the order broke down there. The crowd was immense. The meeting had to take place under the fierce sun. The people had been waiting since morning without any shade overhead. The noise and the din were terrible. It was impossible for me to get any quiet; and volunteers were unable to restrain the vast crowd from coming to touch me. The fact is that not much work had been done there before. The volunteers were new to the task. The poor fellows tried their best. Nobody was to blame. It was a new situation and a new experience for them. And the people were not to be deprived of what they must have considered to be the only opportunity of coming near me and touching me. It is an affectionate superstition; but it is also most embarrassing for me. I spoke to them about *Kāśāḍā*, about the spinning wheel, about temperance, gambling and the like; but I am afraid that it was all like foreign speech to them. Mysterious are the ways of God. Tens of thousands of people irresistibly drawn to some one or to some thing of whom or which they had but the vaguest idea. I do not know whether they profited by coming to see me, a perfectly strange being to them. I do not know whether it was worthwhile my going to Forbesgunj. Perhaps it is as well that we do not know the results of all we do, if only we do things for the service of God and humanity and do nothing which we know to be wrong.



# CONCLUSION:

From Forbegganj we proceeded to Vishanpur which is about 25 miles from Purnea. It is a rough motor ride because there is no proper metalled road. There was a tremendous gathering in this village and I was surprised to see so much public spirit in a place so remote from the railway line. The people presented a good purse for the *Memorial*. A novel feature of this meeting was that a permanent platform was built for the meeting. It was nearly fifteen feet high. It is brick-built. Underneath is a *Khadker Store*. The whole conception combines beauty with use. The most pleasing function in this village was a nicely built library and reading room which I had the privilege of opening. There is a large open enclosure surrounding the library building provided with marble benches and the library itself is a memorial to the deceased wife of Chaudhry Lalchand. That in a place like Vishanpur such an upto-date memorial should have been thought of shows a great advance in political education of the right sort. From Vishanpur we came back to Purnea which is the headquarters of the District where practically the Bihar tour was concluded with the usual functions. The tour really concluded at Hajipur to which I was attracted four years ago by the youthful zeal of a band of workers through whose energy a national school was established. Purnea District has supplied over seventeen thousand rupees, a part of which is earmarked for the *Bihar (National) Vigrahuth*. The rest about fifteen thousand is for the *Dusse-banthe Memorial Fund*. Throughout Bihar tour including this sum the total collection for the *Memorial* amounted to about 50,000 rupees.

It is not without sorrow that I am leaving the simple and good people of Bihar. I hope, if all goes well, to finish the balance of the Bihar tour early next year but I expect that the Biharites will show much further progress in *Khadker* and *Chukke* during the intervening months. The whole of the stock of beautiful *Khadker* now lying in its *Khadker* stores should be cleared. There must be many members of the A.I.S.A. enrolled and centres where poor people are awaiting

volunteers should be organised for spinning. The drink evil should be brought under control.

M. K. Gandhi"

### BIHAR NOTES (CONCLUDED)

#### *A Risky Platform:*

At Hajipur my Bihar tour ended. It was all orderliness and noiselessness at Hajipur. Though I was lodged in the national school huts in front of which the huge public meeting took place, the volunteers were disciplined and the crowds were previously informed through notices and otherwise that I was ill-able to bear the strain of noise, rush and the touching of feet. In spite of, therefore, there being hundreds of men crowding round the school premises I had perfect quiet. Of all the national schools in Bihar this is perhaps the best managed and the best manned, Janakdhari Babu, a non-co-operating Fakir with a character of great beauty, being the principal. There was a purse, too, of nearly Rs. 5,000 at Hajipur. With this pleasant ending and the ceremony at Sonapur of opening a *Sanskran* chiefly for the purpose of attending to the comfort and requirements of thousands of visitors who annually flock to Sonapur in connection with a unique fair that takes place there every full moon day of the first month of the Hindu year and which draws the finest horses, elephants and cattle to the Sonapur fair, the Bihar tour ended and I entered U P, Balia being the first place.

M. K. Gandhi."

(6) In reply to Addresses, presented to Mahatma Gandhi by the public, the Municipality and the District Board of Bhagalpur, in a public meeting, he delivered a speech in Hindi of which the following is a free English rendering:—

"Mr. President and my Hindu and Muslim brethren, —I am grateful to you for the Addresses you have given me. I want to tell you that the fact that I have got the

opportunity to come over to you has greatly increased my pleasure.

I perfectly remember the last time I came over here, some 4 or 5 years ago. What difference do I mark in the situation of then and now? You have referred to the Hindu-Muslim question in one of the Addresses. I would like to say something about this question to my Hindu and Muslim brethren. But I regard myself to be a sensible man. I know my limitations well. I have fully realized it that I have no longer that influence which I commanded over the Hindus and the Mohamedans in 1921. Today, I can persuade neither the Hindus nor the Mohamedans. I know it full well that any good result can come out only when both rid themselves of their madness. Call it god or *Kudra*, there is a force before which our heads are always bowed down. We ought to fear Him and determine our duty through that fear. There is no reason whatsoever to justify the Hindus and the Mussalmans to fight one another. I do see neither religious grievance nor any other justification for the fight. It is our madness alone which is responsible for it. If we want to get rid of this ignorance and become men, we must give up our pride and in fear of God purify our heart and again try to unite and become one.

Man wants one thing and God may another. What do we know of the purpose which He wants to fulfil by making our hearts so bad? God's work only He knows. On being asked about it by a few Mussalman friends who are genuinely and really anxious to settle this quarrel, I have advised them to do exactly as some Mussalmans of the time of the first four Caliphs did. What is to be done when two brothers fight among themselves? Misunderstanding is created, God is forgotten and they are at daggers drawn to cut one another's throat. We should treat this case as the one just described, and do what the noble Mussalmans of those days did. I have this advice for both the Hindus and the Mussalmans that those Hindus who do not hate the Muslims and have regard for the Quran and those Mussalmans who have no enmity with the Hindus and respect the Gita as well should bring themselves into the depth of their own hearts.

Now, the days are no more when one used to seek refuge in the caves of Egypt or the jungles of the Himalayas. Even there one can get no peace now. He will be followed by the electric light, and even if that does not, the airships will be there to disturb him. In these days we have access to only one cave. We are to sit in that cave of our hearts and pray to God 'Keep at least my heart pure.' When the quarrelling brothers are cured of their madness the cave dwellers will be requisitioned for service. May God bless the whole nation and all those who have kept aloof from these quarrels! Not only these two communities but all classes living in India, men of all provinces, may live together as brothers and sisters. They may regard others' women as their own mothers and sisters. I would like every Hindu and Mussalman to know that it is only they, who are mad, who think of saving Islam by the help of the sword only. And to those Hindus also who want to save Hinduism by the help of the sword my message is that if you want to draw your swords, draw them by all means but for the sake of God do not call in a third party to arbitrate. You want to escape from one another and it is because of this that you recognize the necessity of the existence of a third party. So, I have thought it fit to bring myself in my own heart. I am no more going to fight for Hindu-Muslim quarrels. All that was possible for a man to do I have tried. Now, I pray to God for more knowledge. I believe that in due time the Hindus and the Mussalmans will come round, but let those fight who want to. Let all Hindus and Mussalmans, who like to draw their swords against one another, draw it, but it would have been much better if they had taken to the practice of non-violence as a religious duty. I have understood non-violence only after having fully known what violence is. I have said this many a time and I do it now again—better commit violence rather than sit helplessly in the name of non-violence. To the coward I shall not be able to deliver my message of non-violence. Him I shall not be able to teach the lesson of peacefulness. I will be able to give the lesson of peace, the lesson of non-violence only to those who do not fear to die, who

are not afraid of their opponents. Maulana Shaukat Ali once told me that he and his brother had not lost their senses when they accepted non-violence as a policy. They did so because they knew that non-violence that I suggested requires the use of all the bravery that they possessed. They knew that in non-violence also it was necessary to know and practise the art of dying and they were prepared to die happily if occasion arose for it. But they felt that if they died with their swords drawn, they would be committing suicide but as they wanted to die in the service of the country and Islam, they would have to die without drawing blood.

Whenever I see cowardice and fear I ask people to draw the sword. The inhabitants of a neighbouring village told me, when I went to Bettiah in 1921, that the policemen molested their women and looted their houses and whilst the police were doing this they had run away. When I asked them the reason of it they at once told me that their running away was due to my teaching of non-violence. I felt then that if the earth could have given me place it would have been better for me to have burned myself therein. Had I ever given the lesson eventually draw the sword in any case? If one could not die without drawing blood he must retaliate and die in the protection of his property and honour. I had told them to die long before any body could touch their wives and if they could not die without retaliation, they were to take their swords in their hand and die before anybody could reach their women. They were to teach their women also to protect their own honour, to die before any body could lay his hands upon their body. One who knows how to die becomes free for ever. The sword becomes a worthless weapon for him. The swordsman loses all his strength with the destruction of his sword, but one who knows the science of dying without injuring the wrong-doer dies while doing his work. His weapon knows no destruction. But what am I to say to them who leave their women to their fate and fly away? Such a man is worse than mere animal. It would be much better if he at least fought with sword in hand but a coward would not

use even the sword. For his protection he will go to the Government, he will engage the 'gundas' and what not. What am I to say to such men?"

(7) "Your letter has been travelling with me all this time. I am now writing this in the train that is taking me to Madras. I had no intention of being inattentive to anybody at Belgaum. But what was I to do. I had not a moment for personal chats. I therefore hardened my heart.

You are morose. There is no occasion for it. Let us do the day's work to the best of our ability and smilè. All work faithfully done has the same value in the book of life. Why then should we worry?

You have not asked any definite questions. But if you have any pray do not hesitate to ask them. Be assured that you are the same to me that you were before. *I treasure the memory of the faithful co-workers of Champaran. I shall never have and never had a more faithful bond to work with. If I had such a bond throughout India, Swaraj will not be long in coming to India.*" (Letter written by Mahatma Gandhi to Shri Janakdhari Prasad on the 6th March, 1925, on the train).<sup>1</sup>

(8) "I live in the hope based on God's promise that there is no eternal grief or eternal happiness in this world and that therefore every grief is followed by joy if only one would wait and have faith. I have patience because I have faith and therefore refuse to weep over the tragedy going on in front of me."

(Letter written by Mahatma Gandhi to Shri Janakdhari Prasad on the 26th March, 1926).

(9) "I was delighted to receive your letter after such a prolonged interval. I note the difficulties the school is going through. Faith has no limitation of time. That which is limited by time is not faith at all. If therefore you have boundless faith in your mission, I have not a shadow of doubt that it will succeed the cause being right.

1. Italics are my own.

With reference to the two difficulties my prescription is the same. At the present moment, the atmosphere has become so impure that I cannot advise the formation of any new party or group. Those of us who do not believe in aggressiveness with regard to Hindu-Muslim unity and do not believe in Council entry in any shape or form must each one remain true to our ideal. We do not need any organisation to keep up our spirits. Those who need that outward help are wanting in deep conviction and I am anxious that only those who have deep and abiding conviction should remain out. For, it may be that there are still greater trials in store for us. Those, therefore, who have weak faith will then succumb. It will be the indomitable remnant that will carry the day in the end, because, I see no freedom except through Non-Co-operation. My faith in it is growing with time.

I hope you are keeping excellent health."

*(Letter written by Mahatma Gandhi to Shri Jasadhar Prasad from the Ashram, Sabaramati, on the 28th June, 1926).*

(10) "How should I forget you? Your letter though saddening is welcome. I shall deal with it in Y.I. Meanwhile consult Rajendra Babu and if you find that you cannot usefully carry out the constructive programme, you may resign in a body. But this means that you will work away at the Congress organisation whether you are one or many but only non-violently and truthfully. If you do not understand this and if time presses, elect your office-bearers. There is always time for resigning, if you cannot work satisfactorily. Let nothing be done in a hurry."

*(Letter written by Mahatma Gandhi to Shri Jasadhar Prasad, Tuesday).*

(11) "*A Cry for Calm.*"

Babu Rajendra Prasad sends me the following letter:

"I have just returned after a visit to one of the production centres under the A.I.S.A. in Behar. The place is in the District of Darbhanga and is known as Pandaul. The following facts may prove of some interest to the readers of *YOUNG INDIA*. There are two kinds of *Khadī* produced in Darbhanga

District, the ordinary white *Khad* and the fine saffron coloured *Khad* known as *loka*. Between January 1925 and January 1926, the total amount of white *Khad* produced was 91,986 yards on which the weaving charges amounted to Rs. 11,604 and the spinning wages came approximately to Rs. 10,202. With regard to the spinning wages I have said 'approximately, because no account of it is kept separately, as the system in vogue there is not to purchase yarn for cash but to exchange it for one and half times its weight in cotton for yarned 8 to 10 counts and for more or less respectively in the case of higher or lower counts. Yarn of 20 counts and more is purchased for cash. There is a large number of weavers in the locality and in order that they may be kept supplied with yarn, the Pandaul production depot has three yarn exchange centres and the figures for the week ending 16th or 17th February on which date Babu Satishchandra Das Gupta and I visited these exchange centres are still more striking

#### Chhatwan

Cotton Exchanged			Yarn			Difference			Wages	
Mds.	Srs.	Ch.	Mds.	Srs.	Ch.	Mds.	Srs.	Ch.	Rs.	A. P.
38	33	14	25	29	8	13	35	6	426	3-9
8	10	10	5	20	12	2	29	14	89	5-0
8	32	11	5	37	4	2	35	7	9	12-9
<hr/>			<hr/>			<hr/>			<hr/>	
55	37	3	37	7	8	19	20	11	525	5-6
<hr/>			<hr/>			<hr/>			<hr/>	

"The weaving wages paid within the same week at Pandaul came to Rs. 348-5-9; the total amounts of wages paid to spinners and weavers thus comes to Rs. 956-11-3 in one week. It may be said without fear of contradiction that the sum of Rs. 10,202 earned by spinners in 1925 and January 1926 represents their earning for light work done during leisure hours, as not one of them has been withdrawn from other work, and similarly the sum of Rs. 600 being distributed now every week in this centre alone represents the earnings of off-hours.



I have omitted from the letter the facts related by Satish Babu regarding the eagerness of the spinners to get their portion of cotton. Rajendra Babu adds that the majority of the spinners are Mussalman women. I wish he had given the number of spinners among whom over Rs. 600 are being distributed weekly. But there is little difficulty in discovering the number as the average earning per week from the use of spare hours cannot be more than eight annas. Therefore, at least 1,200 needy women are being served in only three centres. There are to my knowledge hundreds of such centres which can be opened if we have men and money. Unfortunately there is a dearth of both and more of men than of money. By judicious begging, money can be collected, but equally easily by workers of the right sort. But the facts that are being daily collected show that it is merely a question of time when handspinning must become universal. During the transition stage we must concentrate upon the centres that are already working and make them self-supporting and permanent by effective organisation. The cry for cotton must be satisfied. And that can only be done by moved men coming out with donations in cash or kind. The *All-India Deobandian Memorial* is not being responded to, as it should, largely because collecting has been suspended. I hope, however, the information that Sjs. Rajagopalachari and Rajendra Babu have made available to us will be sufficient incentive to those who believe in the potency of the spinning wheel to loosen their purse strings. To donate to the wheel is in my opinion an ideal form of charity for it helps the poor without making them beggars and idlers and without robbing them of self-respect and at the same is calculated to make India self-supporting in the matter of clothing and to save her the annual drain of nearly sixty crores of rupees.

M. K. G.

*Young India, 24 March, 1926*

(12) "*Kāsh in Bihar*"

Sjt. Rajendra Prasad has sent me the report of the work of the Bihar branch of the A.I.S.A. for the year ending September 1926. It is a record of steady progress. After

mentioning the vicissitudes the organisation had to pass through in the early stages, the report says:

'The following figures will show the progress of work since the work was centralised under the *Khadir Board* and later under the *A. I. S. A.*

	April 1924 to Sept 1924	October 1924 to March 1925	April 1925 to Sept. 1925	October 1925 to March 1926	April 1926 to Sept. 1926
Production	Rs. 21,588	35,273	47,031	51,080	96,723
Sale	Rs. 17,479	27,784	33,335	51,665	59,678

'This statement does not include the figures for production and sale of *Khadir* by the *Gandhi-Kutir*, whose work till the beginning of 1926 was on a more extensive scale than that of the *Provincial Khadir Board* and, latterly, the Bihar branch of the *A.I.S.A.*'

There are 8 production and sale centres and 11 sale depots. Beside these there are sale agencies at 6 places and more are being established. The agency has 65 whole-time workers including two honorary workers. Their average earnings are Rs. 25 per month. During the year under review 2,698 spinners earned Rs. 29,519; 489 weavers, Rs. 36,862, 6 tailors, Rs. 230 during two months; 8 dyers and printers Rs. 2,273 (during six months) including the cost of dyes; and 40 washer-men Rs. 1,951 during six months. It goes without saying that the spinners and weavers too were not whole-time workers. They worked only during their spare time and irregularly.

The report then says:—'The progress that has been made is not only in regard to increased production and sale but also in regard to the quality of *Khadir* and reduction in its price.' The average price in 1923 was Rs. 1.0.5 per yard of fine cloth. It was reduced to Rs. 13 in 1926. When the yarn was very weak the weaving charge was 3 annas 3 pies per yard of 45 inches width. On account of the improvement in the yarn, it has now been reduced to 2 annas 3 pies per yard of the same width. Nor is there any diff-

culty about getting sufficient weavers to weave handspun yarn. Some of these weavers weave even up to 72 inches width, and the variety of weaving includes twills, coatings of various designs, etc. Dyeing and printing is being developed under the special care of a graduate of the Bihar Vidyapeeth.

The report after mentioning the work in different branches of the organisation says: 'If we could dispose of our present stock, it is expected that we shall be able to reduce our prices still farther by about 10 p.c.'

It naturally dwells upon the successful peripatetic exhibitions that were held during the year, of which a detailed account has appeared from time to time in these pages. The interesting report contains the following pregnant reflections:

'The province of Bihar is particularly suited for *Akhaddar* work. The population is agricultural; there is no industry in the province worth the name, outside the coal-fields of Chota Nagpur and apart from the great *Tata Iron and Steel Works* at Jamshedpur. The tradition of spinning is still extant in most parts of it and the number of weavers and looms is large enough to supply almost the entire requirement of cloth of the province. Cotton, though of an inferior quality, is also produced in many parts of it. The work of production of *Akhaddar* is, therefore, not very difficult, although it requires organisation and technical skill to improve its quality. It can be extended almost indefinitely, if sufficient capital and organising and technical skill are forthcoming.'

'The above narrative will show the progress made in reviving the ancient but practically all but dead industry of spinning in Bihar. We have succeeded in touching but the merest fringe of the vast area in which spinning can be revived and made to furnish a much needed occupation for the idle hours of our great agricultural population. That its possibilities are vast can hardly be denied. That some supplementary occupation, not to speak of income, is necessary for the population will be apparent from the fact that the average quantity of land actually cultivated with food and non-food crops is less than three quarters of an acre per head. It is the yield of this small quantity of land, nearly

four-fifths of which are unmitigated and depend upon the freaks of the monsoon, that is expected, not only to keep the body and soul together of every individual, but also to supply him with cloth and other necessities of life and to meet among others all demands of the Zemindar, the society and the state. Looked at from this point of view the admittedly scanty earning of 7 pias per day by *Chakda* is not, after all, so small and does afford, as experience has shown, substantial relief to a class of people who need such relief but cannot get it through forced unemployment. It is believed that agriculture does not require more than a hundred days' labour in the year but the work is so distributed that the agriculturist cannot leave his farm and seek work elsewhere at a distance. In fact, the nature of the work is such that it allows plenty of leisure but at short intervals and a supplementary industry, which is not capable of being taken up and put aside to be resumed later at the stage at which it was left, cannot be usefully taken up. Experience has shown that the *Chakda* alone can serve the purpose.<sup>1</sup>

It is hoped that the appeal made in the report to the public for the purchase of *Chakda* will meet with the liberal response it deserves.

M. K. Gandhi

*Young India*, 20th January, 1927."

(13) "*Weekly Letter*"

"I have come here to do business—to collect money for *Chakda* and *Khad* and to sell *Khad*. Who knows this may be my last visit to Bihar! Let me do as much business as I can." This was the brief one-minute speech that Mahatma Gandhi addressed to a crowd gathered at a railway station in Bihar, and business visit it has been indeed in right earnest. We began with places south of the Ganges, Daltonganj in Chota Nagpur being the first place, thence to Gaya through the coal-fields, and then we crossed the Ganges at Patna and having been right through the rich alluvial tracts of Chapra District had a quiet day at Jhaddi, a place of pilgrimage for us, being the village in which Rajendra Babu

1 These letters of Mahadev Desai contain passages from some of the speeches of Mahatma Gandhi.

was born. Since then it has been a rush through space—some more subdivisions in Chapra district, studded at every half a mile with emeralds of mango-groves and carpeted with fields smiling with green *fur* and wheat and gram and peas, and then again to East and North to Dambhanga.

It has been a very strenuous time, what with noisy crowds and motor journeys over bad roads and what with friends' anxiety to cover as many places as possible in the shortest possible time. At Daltonganj the villagers from the hillsides had come from distances of twenty to thirty miles and mustered in their thousands. One speech or one speaker could not reach them at a time, so Gandhiji first addressed the people in front, then those in the rear and then on the sides. This was sufficient to restore quiet and they responded wonderfully to the appeal for collections which has now become a permanent feature at all meetings. The collections at Daltonganj were so successful that though the bulk of the contributions were in copper and nickel, the total collected was Rs. 526, i.e. as much as one third of the purse collected from the select rich. The meetings at Bānā and Maharajganj were nearly quite as big as at Daltonganj, but there was no organization and they could be managed with very great difficulty. The meeting, however, that was at once a model of orderliness and the biggest that we have yet had was at Mairua. Over thirty thousand people had seated themselves, almost in battle array, the vast mass, including the huge elephants that had brought some of them to the meeting, having an appearance of a peaceful military camp. There was not a stir when Gandhiji came and none even when it was announced that he would first give a few minutes to the women who had a *pardā* meeting in a corner, and then come and address them. A long speech was out of the question here. They did not want a speech either. They knew what they were to be told and what was to be expected of them. But Gandhiji addressed them a few words from several places in the meeting and asked them to empty their pockets for the poor. And the response that they made has been something unique in our memory. The coins did not rain, they poured. Men and women (who had now broken through their *pardā*),

young and old, vied with one another to contribute their mites, and paid ringing testimony to the fact that it was a poor man's movement. The run on the dias was just like a run on a bank, not in this case to embarrass the *Khadkar* bank, but to enrich it. The pile of coins collected required three men to carry and it is estimated that it will amount to nothing less than Rs. 1,000. Mairwa has a *Khadkar* depot in charge of the A.I.S.A. and an army of volunteers who had evidently done their duty. The meeting at Gopalganj was nearly quite as big, but the realisations were much less, as the meeting was tightly packed and there was scarcely any room for the collectors to go about with their bags.

The collections at other places were no less significant, those at women's meetings easily exceeding a hundred and even a couple of hundreds if the ornaments were taken into account. But one thing is clear. The countryside is still instinct with life, no matter how many 'ups and downs' the movement might have undergone. There is much more pure *Khash* in evidence than in the towns and one hears of a number of people everywhere who spin and weave their own cloth for themselves. The upper classes have, as everywhere, suffered from the so called 'depression', with the result that the response of the city and town dwellers has been far from satisfactory. Jharia, which topped the list in the province in 1921, will probably be among the lowest this time, chiefly no doubt due to many of the Indian collieries lying idle, thanks to the South African coal, which is suffered to maintain a successful competition with the Indian coal by means of heavy railway freights. At Gaya the puny collection might well have been better if it had been better organised. But even here the collections at the meeting were good. A gentleman gave away his Ford which was sold to the highest bidder at Rs. 750. The response at Chapra and Sevan has been the poorest, though even there the poor men's mite was commendable. The day on which the largest business has been done during the tour was the 18th—about Rs. 7,500 having been collected from Dalsingrao, Samastipur and Darbhanga.

The women's meetings have been very good everywhere though they might have been better, if they had been less noisy and more orderly. A special feature at these meetings has been the collection of ornaments, a good beginning having been made at Sonapur. There was a quieter little meeting of women here whom Gandhiji exhorted to relieve themselves from the encumbrance of heavy ornaments. 'Think of Sita,' he said, 'Do you imagine she went about with Rama in his 14 years' forest wanderings with heavy ornaments like you? Do you think they add to your beauty? Sita cared for the beauty of her heart and covered her body with pure *Khadar*. The heavy ornaments you wear are not only ugly, but harmful in as much as they are the permanent receptacles of dirt. Free yourselves of these shackles and relieve the poverty of people who have no clothes, much less ornaments, to wear.' The heavy ornaments collected here served as eloquent speeches at other meetings.

At Sonapur one more new departure was made by Gandhiji taking a stock of *Khadar* with himself and selling it at every station and every meeting. The response has been uniformly satisfactory, hundreds of Rupees worth of *Khadar* being sold at every meeting.

I summarise here the result of the collections:

	<i>Paise</i>	<i>Collections at meeting</i>
Daltonganj	1,500	754-4-9
Coalfields	2,263	743-10-9
Aurangabad	2,501	225-0-9
Gaya	1,795	350-0-3
Sonapur	481	205-12-0
Chapra		358-10-4½
Ekma		352-12-4½
Maharajganj	575	372-11-9
Dahlganj	2,000	310-14-10½

I am not able to make the list up to date as the collections are in many cases being counted. The collections at meetings include those at women's meetings also.

The provinces which have been already booked for Gandhiji's visit and have an ample margin of time left to prepare for the visit will, it is hoped, not let the grass grow under their feet. Let them organise their meetings well, both for collection and sale of *Kash*. Let them have ample walking spaces, in case of big meetings, for Gandhiji to address them from any point and for collectors to move about, and let them have at the meetings *Kash* of all varieties and texture to suit all prices and tastes.

I have done with the business part of the visit. I shall briefly dwell on items of incidental interest. The Gaya municipal address, out of all addresses, was frankly sceptical about *Kash* and untouchability programme, and Gandhiji wondered and asked why an address was voted to him at all, and why he was not previously favoured with a copy of the interesting address. At Gaya, again, there was an address given by the *Hindu Sabha*, which expressed heartiest sympathy with the *Kash* and untouchability programme—I wonder if the gentleman who read the address was not also a municipal councillor—and asked Gandhiji to bless their *Shuddhi* work. The reply is worth recording: "I have made no secret of the fact that I did not approve of all aspects of the '*Shuddhi*' work. After much prayerful study of the Hindu *Shastras* I have come to the conclusion that there is no room in them for conversions such as they have in Islam and Christianity. I am also certain on a prayerful reading of the *Gospel* that there is no warrant for the *shuddhi* that is being promoted today. It is possible that I may be mistaken. Let God correct me in that case. I for myself would love to protect my religion with *tapashtapya*—the way of prayerful suffering which is the royal road to success in any noble object. The real memorial that the Hindus can raise to Swamiji is to rid Hinduism of the curse of untouchability. Let both Hindus and Mussalmans cleanse their hearts with the purifying blood of Swamiji's sacrifice. I must be free to read the *Gita* or the *Koran* of my own accord. Why should a Hindu compel me to read the one or a Mussalman to read the other? Why should I need a Christian to compel me to read the Bible? No one may stand between a





man and his religion or God. He who has no inkling of religion, whose heart is aild and unperfected—how dare he purify (by proselytising) others? But that is my opinion. And as I am a votary of liberty, I have, in spite of my opinion, insisted that Shradddhanandji had as much right to propagate the *Vedic Dharma* as a Mussalman to propagate that of the *Koran*. And if Shradddhanandji was assassinated in his *Shuddhi* work, it did no credit to Islam. Hindugam is proud of the sacrifice and has been enriched by it. Let no Mussalman secretly approve of the act or believe that it has done any good to Islam. Let not a single Hindu harbour any thought of retaliation. If the Hindu and the Mussalman rid themselves of mutual distrust and fear, there is no power that can stop their freedom. We are the makers of our own slavery. I had sealed my lips up to now on this burning topic. It is Shradddhanandji's sacrifice that has compelled me to open them to a certain extent. But I can give no guidance in this atmosphere. I shall only send my prayers to God that he may rid us of fear and hatred and distrust, and make us rely solely on the strength of love."

But I must conclude this letter which has already exceeded its usual length. I send a fairly long condensed summary of Gandhiji's speech at Sewan where he was particularly requested to address himself to Hindu-Muslim unity.

M. D.

6402

*Young India,*  
27th January, 1927."

"The rush through space continues and will continue until we reach the end of our tour at Patna on the 30th. The surging crowds and stupendous meetings make one wonder whether the organisers of the tour could not have done anything better than this heavy programme to be performed at breakneck speed. And yet they could not have done anything better, for we find that in spite of our anxiety to satisfy all they have not been able to include all places that wanted to be on the programme. And when we reach the end, the feeling will not be so much of relief as of thankfulness that Gandhiji has stood the strain fairly well—

not a sense of relief, for the thousands of people that for a moment overwhelm you fill you with hope of the tremendous possibilities of a movement the magnitude of which newspapers retelling gloomy reports of communal disturbances and division among Congress ranks have failed to gauge. Let the doubter and the sceptic go to Bihar and see that the province watered by the mighty rivers Ganges and Sarayu, Gandak and Son, is watered no less by the mighty Ganges of faith which will never dry.

Darbhangā, Champaran, Monghyr, and Arrah—four districts in the course of a week! It is impossible to gather one's impressions and arrange them however briefly within the scope of a weekly letter. But I shall try to give you a sketch as hurried as the tour.

Darbhangā is the land of modern *utthas* if I may say so without offending orthodox susceptibilities. For *utthas* are holy and purifying, and whereas the squalour and cupidity and hypocrisy that reign in our orthodox *utthas* stink in one's nostrils, a pilgrimage to the modern ones—the *Khadī* depots—chastens and uplifts. 'You must not accompany me,' said Gandhiji. 'You will see nothing today in the rush and hurry. Go to these places to-morrow and study them to your heart's content.' And I willingly obeyed. The visit was not only a study, but a revelation, a feast for the eyes and solace for the soul. Pandaul, and Madhubani and Sakri and Kapsia conjure up visions before you. In beautifully swept courtyards these women were sitting—all Mussalmans, it will gladden Maulana Shaukat Ali's heart to know—working out of their wheels a music of which the echoes still resound in the ears.

Not ten or fifty, but three hundred giving a wonderful demonstration of the art to which they were born. As we paused and wondered at every stage at the dexterity of these mothers and grandmothers, one of the men who showed us round said: 'There are not less than a thousand, *En*, in this locality. They spin and we weave. These are all women from weavers' families.' And as you proceed you notice a sister young, but awfully humpbacked, and you seem to melt with pity at her misfortune. But no! she laughs at your

pitiful look, and the gossamer yarn running out of her proud fingers seems to tell you that God has not deprived her of the cunning of her fingers and she can earn therewith a living possibly more honourable than the spectators.' A few yards from her is a dame, whose silver hair, wrinkled forehead and crumpled cheeks tell you her years. She is spinning away her fine *Kokh* yarn without caring to notice you. 'How long have you been doing this?' 'Since morning,' she replies. 'No, I mean, how many years?' 'I cannot say exactly.' She smiles wondering at the question. 'But you can imagine, I began it ever since I was married when I was that age,' she says, pointing to a tot who might have been her great-grand-daughter. 'And how much do you earn out of this?' the irrepressible economist in you asks. 'Well, that is the sole means of our livelihood,' she says, and when pressed to be more definite she gives you details which the weaver friend clad in fine homespun has to help you to understand. 'That means 7 to 8 rupees a month earned in your spare hours?' you ask almost envying her wage, though you earn ten times as much with less labour. 'Well, yes,' she modestly admits, not willing to proclaim her high wage. And lest you should run away with a hasty inference she adds: 'Not all earn so much. All have not as much time as I, and all do not spin so well. And then you do not get as much out of ordinary yarn as from *Kokh* yarn.'

At the depot you meet women with their bundles of yarn anxious to tell the visitors that the fall in the cotton prices have adversely affected them. How? They take away a pound and a half of cotton and return a pound of yarn, the price of half a pound of cotton being their wage. It was a commentary on the exchange system of getting yarn that obtains in these parts.

At Belwar there is a colony of Brahmin women-spinners, girls spinning on their neat little *alkis* and elderly women on their wheels. Their hands do not show the cunning of their Musalman sisters, but the boundless enthusiasm of a sixty years old virgin widow who has brigaded them tells you what the *Charkha* means to them. Among these, too, there are spinners, though not many, whose art you pause to admire.

The modest mother spinning away with the baby at her breast has no proud tale of a heavy wage to tell you. But more proudly still, because unselfishly, she says: 'My yarn went to make Mahatmaji's garland yesterday.' Kapasia is a village where nearly all the weavers weave handspun yarn. We visited a number of houses and found men, women, and children working and not a soul idle. It was, again, a Musalman village organised by Hindu youths. Let the Musalman sceptic visit one of these centres and learn the lesson of patriotism and perseverance from these Musalman men and women. We sat and talked with the weavers. It was no use talking to them. Their spokesman was far more able to give you a business-like speech. He knew both the economics and politics of his trade. 'Do you ever fight as Hindus and Musalmans do in other parts?' 'No, sir, we do fight amongst ourselves, as the Hindus do amongst themselves, but never the one community with the other. We have no time left. Our women spin and we weave. The Musalman weaver and the Hindu spinner are as brother and sister. I do wish our Brahmin brethren also were doing something when their women spin away at their wheels,' he said casting a just reflection on the idle Brahmins.

But I must pass on. Darbhanga and Monghyr have been the best in point of contributions too. Some of the monster meetings in Muzaffarpur district were as big as, if less organised than, the Mauwa meeting. The demonstrations in Champaran have been very noisy—they seem to have a special claim on Gandhiji, feeling as they do that they made him famous—and those in Monghyr and Arrah have been the rowdiest, possibly because Gandhiji visited some of these places for the first time. And yet the response everywhere was heartiest, collections having been quite in proportion to the crowds, excepting at Motihari, where not much could be collected, for no fault of the crowd, but because of the faulty arrangement of the meeting.

In this connection let me make an observation or two. I have said something in my last as to the arrangement of the meeting. Particular care requires to be taken in the construction of the platform. It should be not less than six to

seven feet high and broad enough to seat five or six people, with enough space on all sides. That will ensure collections by Gandhiji without danger of a rush or accident (so many people being anxious to hand the money to Gandhiji himself). At Begusarai in Monghyr the arrangement in this respect was perfect, the platform being something over six feet supported on four strong pillars, between which men could come and go. And as Gandhiji bended to receive the money, men at the rate of 14 per minute passed through his hands, so to say, having satisfied themselves that they paid the money to Gandhiji himself, and yet being successfully prevented from touching his feet—a thing which always gives rise to terrific rush and crush. We escaped accidents in Bihar only by a fluke. Let us, however, make accidents practically impossible, by better organisation and arrangements.

It must be said that during the short time at their disposal the workers succeeded in getting together fair purses at most meetings. The collections at meetings have, as I have pointed out, a lesson all their own. Taking the Mairwa meeting to have numbered 32,000 the collection there worked out at two pice per head. That was the result of nothing but fine organisation. Organisers in other provinces will please note.

I must mention in brief some of the items of interest. Amongst the purses and collections must be mentioned one little purse at Muzaffarpur. It was presented on the occasion of Gandhiji's visit to the local *Khadī Bhandar* by the dyers, washermen and printers who serve this A.I.S.A. branch. It was handed to Gandhiji by a washerman clad in homespun. 'How much is it?' asked Gandhiji. 'Rs. 150, sir.' 'I appreciate it very much, but you must have made a lot of money too?' asked Gandhiji. 'Yes,' said the washerman, 'Thanks to your movement, our hands are full.' 'Well, then,' said Gandhiji, 'know that even this purse that you are presenting will go to add to your income.' 'We know, sir. Nearly twenty *dhotis* here refuse to wash anything but *Khadī*, and two of the best *dhotis* in the town are *Khadī* ones. Some of the fashionable gentry wearing foreign clothes feel the pinch of

our vow, but how can we help it?" 'Certainly not,' said Gandhiji with a hearty laugh. 'Let them beware.' The *Khasi* in the shop was tastefully arranged, there were all varieties, and some of the finest specimens of printing and dyeing were there to satisfy the most aesthetic taste. Let aesthetes and people with homes to furnish ask for whatever variety of cloth they want and they shall have it.

At Muzaffarpur the students also surrounded Gandhiji. There are a thousand belonging to schools and a college. Every place in Champaran is full of happy memories and Gandhiji began his speech to the students by narrating one of the sweetest. 'You students—I wonder if there is still any one of those old boys at college with Kripalani at their head who were the first to welcome and harbour me in Champaran. Your response during the years that followed was no less remarkable. Will you not do today the little that I am asking of you?' The rest of the speech was an impassioned utterance—a plea for *Khasi-weaving* and *Brachmacharya* couched in the same tone as the speech at the Hindu University. They offered a slender purse but responded heartily to the call for purchasing *Khasi*.

I shall reserve some more items of interest for a future letter.

M. D.  
*Young India,*  
 3rd February, 1927."

"Weekly Letter (of Gandhiji's Bihar tour)  
 by Mahadeo Desai

The last day in the Bihar tour was given to the students and Professors of the *Vidyapeeth* and to the *Khasi* workers. Rajendra Babu as Vice-Chancellor gave away the degrees to nine *Sastatals* and Gandhiji delivered the Convocation address. But before I come to that let me dispose of another interesting item. I think it has been known by now that Bihar enjoys a unique place in all the provinces for the mutual good-will and even friendship that subsists between

the non-cooperating workers and the official and the semi-official world. It was not difficult, therefore, for Rajendra Babu to invite the *Vakil*s, Barristers, Members of the Councils, Ministers and Government officials, to a special *Khad*i Exhibition arranged in an institution which is the Hon. Mr. Sinha's gift to Bihar. The meeting was very well attended, but the quiet nature of the function which the organisers had intended it to be was spoiled by crowds who raided the *Shawiana*. Gandhiji would have loved nothing like a discussion on *Khad*i with the members of the audience but as it was not possible he gave them only a talk, of course in Hindi. He had with him charts of daily income per head in different countries of the world, and of production and sale of *Khad*i during recent years prepared by the students of the *Pigypat*. 'Look,' said he, 'how this long strip of red representing the *per capita* income of U.S.A. compares with the little speck which represents that of India. Whereas the one is over Rs. 14 per day the other is  $1\frac{1}{2}$  anna per day! Compare the incomes of other countries—England, France, Japan, which are respectively Rs. 7, 6 and 5 per day. And even this  $1\frac{1}{2}$  anna per day is the average. The actual income of the vast majority of our poor people would be still less, if you were to keep out of account the income of salaried ministers and executive councillors, of a few barristers and fewer millionaires. I ask you in all humility to suggest some way wherewith you can supplement this scanty income. I have been asking one and all but without avail. As a result of hard thinking and living contact with the millions during recent years I have suggested the *Charkha* as the only means calculated to supplement this income.' He then took up the *Khad*i production and sale charts and showed the steady and rapid increase in production in Bihar and drew attention to the slow pace at which sales were going up. This production means Rs. 30,000 distributed to 3,000 of the poor women of Bihar. Come with me to the *Khad*i centres of Darbhanga and see the joy and happiness the *Charkha* has brought to those Hindu and Musalman women. If I cannot give work to more it is not my fault, but yours. If you do not care to purchase the products of their hands the work cannot

progress. Every yard of *Khaddar* you purchase means a few coppers in the hands of those women.' 'A few coppers,' he added, 'and not more. But it means a few coppers where none was earned before. I saw the fallen women in Rajahmundry and Barisal. A young girl came and said to me, 'Gandhi, what can your *Charkha* give us? The men who come to us pay us Rs. 5 to 10 for a few minutes.' I said to her the *Charkha* could not give them that but if they renounced the life of shame I could arrange to teach them spinning weaving and help them to earn a decent living. As I listened to that girl my heart sank within me and I asked God why I was also not born a woman. But if I was not born a woman I can become a woman and it is for the women of India, a large number of whom do not get even an anna per day, that I am going about the country with my spinning wheel and my begging bowl.'

The talk had its effect. Owing to tremendous rush every one could not see the exhibition as well as he wanted, but ministers and baristers saw the exhibition the next day and over Rs. 2,000 worth of *Khaddar* was sold in a day and a half.

I come now to the Convocation. The Registrar's report gave the following figures of educational institutions and students: 1 College with 32 students; 9 high schools with 797 students; 16 middle schools with 1,233 students and 30 primary schools with 1,019 students. In all the institutions the medium of instruction is Hindi, spinning is compulsory and weaving is also taught in some of them. Some of the special features of the report are worth noticing. It traces in brief the history of the different high schools, mostly maintained by public funds, and in some cases from the income of lands donated to them. Whereas the number of students in 3 out of the 9 schools has considerably gone down, in three the number continues as before, and in three the number has been steadily increasing. The College is residential, located in a beautiful mango grove on the bank of the Ganges, and the students' monthly food charges are probably the lowest in the whole of India, i.e. Rs. 8 to 9. Twenty-four have up to now taken their degrees. The report gives interesting details of their post-collegiate career; one of them is preparing for a diploma of the College of



France, one has found an important place in a business firm in Japan, one has studied dairying and cattle-farming and has a dairy of his own, two are engaged in journalism, eleven have taken up service in the national schools, one is doing business in Calcutta and one is doing Congress work.

The very large number of people from the city who attended the Convocation testified to the public attention the institution has succeeded in attracting.

Gandhiji's Convocation address was more a long heart-to-heart chat than a speech, although it was addressed not only to the students, but to the public at large. But it was a public whom he well might have taken into confidence, who understood not only the spoken word, but the unspoken language of the heart. It was a talk full of colour and passion and replete with autobiographic references.

He hoped at the outset that the *Swastika* would live in their lives the vows they had solemnly taken that day and said, as he did at the time of the *Gajanan Paryayath Convocation*, that the *Paryayath* would have more than justified its existence if it turned out even one ideal student and one ideal teacher. For what was the function of these institutions? To discover gems, no matter how few, 'of the purest ray serene.' And he proceeded to give a reminiscence of his South African days: "I lived in South Africa for 20 years, but never once thought of going to see the diamond mines there, partly because I was afraid lest as an 'untouchable' I should be refused admission and insulted. But when Gokhale was there I felt it my duty to show him the chief industry of the place. There was no fear of his being insulted. So we went to the biggest mine there, and saw scenes which I have not forgotten. Mountains upon mountains of excavated earth and stone and no diamonds! It was after millions were sunk in excavating millions of tons of earth and stone that a handful of precious stones could be discovered. And when Cullinan, the owner, discovered the stone named after him—a stone larger than the one which adorned the crown of the Czar and the Kohinoor—after years of labour and millions of pounds had been spent on it, you might imagine his joy. He felt that his lifework was done. If we should

not grudge to spend any amount of labour and capital on a thing which had but an artificial value, how much should we spend on excavating jewels from the human mine? Let us work away in that spirit." That was an apt simile sifter than Ruskin used when he coined that phrase 'manufacture of souls'. That manufacture is only in God's power. We human mortals have but to discover what is already there hidden by God.

He then referred to the positive and negative aspects of all non-cooperating institutions. The negative which consisted of withdrawal of all connection with Government had been already achieved by the existing institutions. When he thought of the number of students and teachers that he had called out, he felt not the slightest regret. Nor did he feel repentant for the fact that many of these had gone back, that many were discontented and unhappy. He felt sorry for them, they had his deep sympathy, but regret or repentance he had none. 'These troubles and sorrows are our daily lot, should be our daily lot. If observance of truth was a bed of roses, if truth cost one nothing and was all happiness and ease, there would be no beauty about it. We must adhere to truth even if the heavens should fall. What matters it, if by following truth we were to lose the whole world including even India? We shall be true votaries of truth only if we follow it to death, in the conviction that under God we will get back the things we hold dear including India. I know that a large number of our teachers and Professors are restless, a few are starving. That is true penance necessary for a proper cleansing of the national atmosphere.'

That was the negative aspect and he was glad it had been carried out and a fair share of penance had been gone through. But this dual world had a positive aspect too, and one which was more difficult is also more permanent. Where else was it to be fulfilled except in institutions like the *Figarukh*? And he drew a contrast between the method of education followed in Europe and that followed in India. 'In Europe the education follows the peculiar genius of the people. One thing is taught in three different countries in three different ways according to the varying culture and genius

of each. Only we delight in slavishly following the English model. The whole objective of the present system was to make us faithful imitators of the West. There is nothing novel in this, it is but the natural outcome of our having entrusted our affairs to those who never cared to know us. Poor Macaulay! What could he do? He sincerely believed that our Sanskrit literature was all superstition and he seriously thought he would give us something wholesome in the shape of Western culture! Let us not abuse him for having unintentionally worked our ruin. As a result of English being the medium of instruction, we have lost all originality. We have become birds without wings. The most we aspire to is a clerkship or editorship. One of us may under the system be a Lord Sinha, but every one at best is designed to be part of the huge foreign machine. At Muzaffarpur a boy came and asked me if by going to a national school, he could one day be a *Lai* (Governor) *saheb*. I said, 'No, you can be a village *Lai*, but not a Lord Sinha. Only Lord Birkenhead can make you that.'

He referred to the craze for more and more palatial buildings reared out of the money of the poor, and raised for the purpose of giving an education which was denied to the poor. 'I had an occasion to visit the Economic Institute at Allahabad. As Prof. Jevons showed me over it and I was told that it had cost Rs. 30 lakhs (if my memory serves me right), I shuddered. You could not raise these palaces but by starving millions. Look at new Delhi which tells the same tale. Look at the grand improvements in first and second class carriages on railways. The whole trend is to think of the privileged few and to neglect the poor. If this is not satanic, what is it? If I must tell the truth I can say nothing less. I have no quarrel with those who conceived the system. They could not do otherwise. How is an elephant to think for an ant? As Sir Leppel Griffin once put it in his speech as member of the South African Deputation, only the toad under the harrow knows where it pinches. The arrangement of our affairs is in their hands and with the best will in the world, the best of them could not order our affairs as well as we could. For theirs is a

diametrically opposite conception to ours. They think in the terms of the privileged few. We must think in the terms of the teeming millions.'

And that naturally led him on to the *Charkha*, which he said should be the very pivot and centre of all our arrangements.

'Let the *Statists* take their degrees, learn anything they like, but let it centre round the *Charkha*, let their economics and their science subserve the purpose of the *Charkha*. Do not relegate the *Charkha* to an old corner. The *Charkha* is the Sun of the solar system of our activities. Without it *Pigpigs* are *Pigpigs* in name. Lord Irwin told God's truth, when he said, that for any advancement through the Councils we should look to the British Parliament. Let us not be angry with him. He cannot think but in the terms of the Parliament. The Sun of his system is London, the Sun of our system is the *Charkha*. I may be mistaken in this, but, so far as I am not convinced of the mistake, I shall treasure it. The *Charkha* at any rate is incapable of harming anybody and without it we, and if I may say so, even the world, will go to rack and ruin. We know what Europe has been feeling after the war in which lies were propagated as the highest religion. The world is weary of the after-effects of the war and even as the *Charkha* is India's comforter today, it may be the world's tomorrow, because it stands not for the greatest good of the greatest number but for the greatest good of all. Whenever I see an erring man, I say to myself I have also erred; when I see a lustful man I say to myself, so I was once; and in this way I feel kinship with every one in the world and feel that I cannot be happy without the humblest of us being happy. It is in this sense that I want you to make the *Charkha* the centre of your studies. Just as Prahlada saw Rama everywhere and Tulsidas could see nothing but Rama even in the image of Krishna, let all your learning be directed to realising the implications of the *Charkha*. Our science, our carpentry, our economics should all be utilised for making the *Charkha* the prop and mainstay of our poorest. I know in Gujarat *Pigpigs* we have not yet succeeded in doing it,

you are not doing it. I am not saying this in a spirit of complaint. I am simply pouring out the agony of my heart. May you all understand it."

The rest was an appeal for helping the *Vidyapeeth* and it evoked a hearty response from all present. Rs. 2,000 were promised and over Rs. 600 were collected on the spot.

M.D.

*Young India,*  
16th February, 1927."

(14) Asked at Sewan (Bihar) to say something on Hindu-Muslim unity, Gandhiji delivered a Hindi speech of which the following is a summary:

"I am glad you say that your subdivision is better than other parts so far as Hindu-Muslim unity is concerned. But can you say that you are so united that your unity will stand the strain of anything happening elsewhere? I wish there can be at least one province, one district, one subdivision in this vast land which can proudly say that no power on earth can foment a Hindu-Muslim quarrel there. We may think we are living, but disunited we are worse than dead. The Hindu thinks that in quarrelling with the Mussalman he is benefiting Hinduism, and the Mussalman thinks that in fighting a Hindu he is benefiting Islam. But each is ruining his faith. And the poison has spread as among the members of the communities themselves. And no wonder. For one man cannot do right in one department of life whilst he is occupied in doing wrong in any other department. Life is one indivisible whole.

I said at Comilla that the problem has passed out of human hands, and that God has taken it into his own. May be the statement springs from my egotism. But I do not think so. I have ample reason for it. With my hand on my breast I can say that not a minute in my life am I forgetful of God. For over twenty years I have been doing everything that I have done as in the presence of God. Hindu-Muslim unity I had made a mission of my life. I worked for it in South Africa, I toiled for it here, I did penance

for it, but God was not satisfied; God did not want me to take any credit for the work. And so I have now washed my hands. I am helpless. I have exhausted all my effort. But as I am a believer in God, as I never for a moment lose faith in Him, as I content myself with the joy and sorrow that He wills for me, I may feel helpless, but I never lose hope. Something within me tells me that Hindu-Muslim unity must come and will come sooner than we might dare to hope, that God will one day force it on us, in spite of ourselves. That is why I said that it has passed into the hands of God. This, I said, might be taken to be an arrogant utterance—arrogant in as much as it implies that it is not in the power of any other man to achieve the work, as if no one has worked for it more than I. But there is no arrogance in the statement. Hundreds may have done the work, with the same earnestness, love and energy, but none with more. And I believe that all of them must be feeling as helpless as I. In 1920 I said that not even the British Empire with all the resources of its armed strength, diplomacy and organisation could efface us, make us slaves, or divide Hindus from Muslims. But that was because I thought we were God-fearing then. We trusted one another and we relied on one another's strength. But how am I to prevail upon you to day to cast off all fear, hatred and distrust? Shradddhanandji was not the enemy of Muslims. He was a warrior, he had the courage of his conviction. Assassination was not the way to fight him. Let us Hindus and Muslims both wash the sins of our heart with his blood.

And what is it that we should be fighting for? We Hindus may be idol-worshippers. We may be mistaken. But when God gave every man the right to make mistakes, when God suffers us to live although we are idol-worshippers, why should not the Muslims suffer us too? And if a Muslim thinks that he must slaughter the cow, why should a Hindu stay his hands by force? Why should he not fall on bended knees before him and plead with him? But we will do no such thing. Well then, God will one day make the Muslims and the Hindu do what we will not do today. If you are

believers, I beseech you to retire into yourselves and pray to the Indweller to stay your hands from wrong and to make them do the right thing. Let that be our prayer every morning and evening. There is no other way."

*Young India,*  
27th January, 1927."

#### NATIONAL SCHOOLS

(15) "During my Bihar tour I came in touch with national schools which continue to flourish in spite of obstacles. But these schools demonstrate to me the reason for the apparent failure of the educational programme of Non-Co-operation, for they prove, at least for me, beyond a shadow of doubt that the thousands of boys who left Government schools went back, not because they were weak, not because the parents were weak but because the school-masters and Professors lacked the necessary dynamic faith in their own programme. But as I have said, even they could not very well be held blameworthy. They were themselves products of the vicious educational system and they could not be expected to throw off all on a sudden all the effects of their old environment. The marvel is that in spite of tremendous odds so many still remain staunch to the ideal and manage to live in the face of over-whelming difficulties. But to the few who still remain staunch, I would make an earnest appeal to be absolutely truthful. Non-Co-operation in every one of its branches had its positive aspect, just as much as its negative. Indeed, the positive aspect was the most permanent. The negative was useless without the positive. Mere withdrawal from Government schools was nothing, if the withdrawal did not mean some corresponding constructive educational programme. Every unaffiliated school is not a national school simply because it is not affiliated and because it does not receive a grant-in-aid. Thousands of missionary schools could be called national, if mere non-affiliation and non-acceptance of grant-in-aid was the one test. We have the definition of National educational institutions given to us by the Congress. The definition includes among other important things, spinning as a compulsory subject. At one of the national schools in

Bihar, I discovered that the *Charlās* existed only in name and for show indifferently staged, and the school-masters were themselves indifferent spinners. They hardly knew carding. They did not know a good *Charlā* from a bad one. They did not know the qualities of a straight spindle. They did not know that it was necessary to have finer spindle in order to draw finer counts and to have a larger output. Almost every wheel that I examined produced a foreign and jarring sound. The Head-master of a school whom I examined critically bravely admitted all the defects and has promised to remedy them. The lesson I should like to draw from this instructive experience is that national school-masters, if they are to make good their double claim, should live up to it, that is, be truthful. If they do not believe in the *Charlā*, they must say so and leave their employers; if the parents who send their children do not believe in the *Charlā* and do not want them to learn and practice spinning, the school-masters must refuse to take such children. But if they believe in the necessity of spinning as a necessary part of the curriculum, they must themselves master its science and technique and teach it to their pupils as they are expected to teach any other subject. It is not for them to say their pupils do not like it. It is for the teachers to make the subject they teach interesting. I hated Chemistry which I subsequently learnt and appreciated as a most interesting study, only because my teacher did not know his subject sufficiently to make it interesting. Hundreds of boys will not take to geometry, a most fascinating recreation, simply because the teachers have no interest in their work and they have themselves not developed enough interest in it. Similarly for spinning. I know of no accomplished spinner who has not acknowledged spinning even as a pastime to be an interesting and uplifting study. A mere thumping on the pāmo would give a headache to a most willing listener, but the exquisite touch of a master would convert even one who has no ear for music. Even so with spinning. My proposal, however, at the present moment is, not to demonstrate the entertaining power of the spinning wheel, but to drive home the truth that, if it has to be taught in national schools, it must



be by teachers who know it thoroughly and who have patience with their pupils. Let us not by our own ignorance or indifference be guilty of producing in our pupils a nausea for an occupation which is generally acknowledged as one of primary national importance.

Honesty demands that school-masters who do not know spinning or have no faith in it should, even though their refusal may cost their dismissal, refuse to have anything to do with it in their schools. If we are truthful, it will be well with us in the end. If we are untruthful, nothing will save us. And such a tremendous movement like handspinning, which depends for its success solely upon the character of the workers in it, has no chance of success if the workers resolve to camouflage. Let me incidentally remind managers of national institutions that it would be also better and more profitable in the long run to introduce *tailor* instead of the spinning wheel. The best spinners among the boys may have good spinning wheels, and that also, so long as they undertake to spin per month a minimum amount of yarn of uniform kind and strength."

*Young India*  
27th January, 1927."

(16) *Insanitary Gaya*

"I have no desire to advertise the insanitation of Gaya, a prince among the holy places of Hinduism. It was because my Hindu soul rebelled against the stinking cess pools I saw in a principal street of Gaya that I was obliged to draw pointed attention to it in my reply to the Address of the Gaya municipality. I am aware that there are many holy places which are insanitary enough. But I do not remember having seen anything like what I saw in Gaya. It is possible that I have not been taken to the dirty places in other sacred places. But insanitation need not be weighed in golden scales. Gaya I am using merely as an example in order to draw the attention of all municipalities that sanitation of their cities must be their first care. This one thing must be above municipal politics, parties and intrigues. Just as it must be the care of every party in a Municipality to

keep its finance pure and above suspicion, so it must be the sacred duty of every party in a Municipality to keep the sanitation of its city in perfect order and above suspicion. Every Municipality should constitute itself a model school for teaching the science of sanitation. Of city sanitation we have not yet much knowledge. We do not mind what happens to our neighbours, so long as our own houses are in fair order. We do not know the use of city latrines. We do not know how to use our drains. It has to be admitted, therefore, that our Municipalities have an arduous task before them in handling this great and important problem. But handled it must be whatever the difficulties. It becomes much more important in sacred cities which are visited by lacs of people from year to year. There was no reason for the foul cess-pool I noticed in Gaya. There is no reason why people should be allowed to dirty river banks. There are many things which Municipalities can, if they will only treat the cities under their care as if they were their own houses, remedy without much difficulty or hindrance from the citizens.

But the difficulty comes from within. Municipal councillors are often indifferent and sometimes obstruct their own elected chairman. Sometimes they are absorbed in internal quarrels and neglect sanitation. It is high time that we developed a healthy sense of civic duty. In this matter we have much to learn from the West. People of the West are builders of big cities. They know the value of fresh air, clean water and clean surroundings. Any city that would attend to its sanitation in a proper spirit will add to both its health and wealth. Sacred cities ought to lead the way in this matter. They have opportunities which other cities do not possess. There is a great deal of wisdom in the English proverb 'Cleanliness is next to godliness.' Moses and Mahomed have laid down laws of sanitation suited to their times. These have to be elaborated in keeping with the modern requirements. It is enough to know from these ancient law-givers that they held cleanliness to be part of a truly religious life."

*Young India,*  
3rd February, 1927."

(17) *"Tear down the Pardah"*

"Whenever I have gone to Bengal, Bihar or United Provinces, I have observed the pardah system more strictly followed than in the other provinces. But when I addressed a meeting at Darbhanga late at night and amid calm surroundings free from noise and bustle and unmanageable crowds, I found in front of me men, but behind me and behind the screen were women of whose presence I knew nothing till my attention was drawn to it. The function was in connection with the laying of the foundation-stone of an orphanage, but I was called upon to address the ladies behind the pardah. The sight of the screen behind which my audience, whose numbers I did not know, was seated made me sad. It pained and humiliated me deeply. I thought of the wrong being done by men to the women of India by clinging to a barbarous custom which, whatever use it might have had when it was first introduced, had now become totally useless and was doing incalculable harm to the country. All the education that we have been receiving for the past 100 years seems to have produced but little impression upon us, for I note that the pardah is being retained even in educated households not because the educated men believe in it themselves but because they will not manfully resist the brutal custom and sweep it away at a stroke. I have the privilege of addressing hundreds of meetings of women attended by thousands. The din and the noise created at these meetings make it impossible to speak with any effect to the women who attend them. Nothing better is to be expected so long as they are caged and confined in their houses and little courtyards. When, therefore, they find themselves congregated in a big room and are expected all of a sudden to listen to some one, they do not know what to do with themselves or with the speaker. And when silence is restored it becomes difficult to interest them in many everyday topics, for they know nothing of them, having been never allowed to breathe the fresh air of freedom. I know that this is a somewhat exaggerated picture. I am quite aware of the very high culture of these thousands of sisters whom I get the privilege of addressing. I know that they are capable of

rising to the same height that men are capable of, and I know, too, that they do not have occasions to go out. But this is not to be put down to the credit of the educated classes. The question is, why have they not gone further? Why do not our women enjoy the same freedom that men do? Why should they not be able to walk out and have fresh air?

Chastity is not a hot-house growth. It cannot be superimposed. It cannot be protected by the surrounding wall of the *pardah*. It must grow from within, and to be worth anything it must be capable of withstanding every unsought temptation. It must be as defiant as Sita's. It must be a very poor thing that cannot stand the gaze of men. Men, to be men, must be able to trust their women-folk, even as the latter are compelled to trust them. Let us not live with one limb completely or partially paralysed. Rama would be nowhere without Sita, free and independent even as he was himself. But for robust independence Draupadi is perhaps a better example. Sita was gentleness incarnate. She was a delicate flower. Draupadi was a giant oak. She bent mighty Bhima himself to her imperious will. Bhima was terrible to every one, but he was a lamb before Draupadi. She stood in no need of protection from any one of the Pandavas. By seeking today to interfere with the free growth of the womanhood of India we are interfering with the growth of free and independent spirited men. What we are doing to our women and what we are doing to the untouchables recoils upon our heads with a force a thousand times multiplied. It partly accounts for our weakness, indecision, narrowness and helplessness. Let us then tear down the *pardah* with one mighty effort."

*Young India,*  
3rd February, 1927."

(18) "*The doom of Pardah*

A reasoned appeal signed by many most influential people of Bihar and almost an equal number of ladies of that province advising the total abolition of the *Pardah* has been just issued in Bihar. The fact that over fifty ladies have signed the appeal shows that if the weak is carried on with vigour,

the *pardah* will be a thing of the past in Bihar. It is worthy of note that the ladies who have signed the appeal are not of the anglicised type but orthodox Hindus. It definitely states:

'We want that the women of our Province should be as free to move about and take their legitimate part in the life of the community in all particulars as their sisters in Karnatak, Maharashtra and Madras in an essentially Indian way, avoiding all attempts at Europeanisation, for while we hold that a change from enforced seclusion to a complete anglicisation would be like dropping from frying pan into fire, we feel that *pardah* must go, if we want our women to develop along Indian ideals. If we want them to add grace and beauty to our social life and raise its moral tone, if we want them to be excellent managers at home, helpful companions of their husbands and useful members of the community, then the *pardah*, as it now exists, must go. In fact no serious step for their welfare can be taken unless the veil is torn down and it is our conviction that if once the energy of half of our population, that has been imprisoned artificially, is released, it will create a force which, if properly guided, will be of immeasurable good to our Province.'

I know the evil effects of the *pardah* in Bihar. The movement has been started none too soon.

The movement has a curious origin. Babu Ramanandan Mishra, a *Khas* worker, was desirous of rescuing his wife from the oppression of the *pardah*. As his people would not let the girl come to the *Ashram*, he took two girls from the *Ashram* to be companions to his wife. One of them, Radhabehn, Maganlal Gandhi's daughter, was to be the tutor. She was accompanied by the late Daltahadur Giri's daughter, Durgadevi. The parents of the girl wife resented the attempt of the *Ashram* girls to wean young Mrs. Mishra from the *pardah*. The girls braved all difficulties. Meanwhile Maganlal Gandhi went to see his daughter and steel her against all odds and persist in her efforts. He took ill in the village where Radhabehn was doing her work and died at Patna. The Bihar friends therefore made it a point of honour to wage war against the *pardah*. Radhabehn brought her charge to the *Ashram*. Her coming to the *Ashram* created additional

ster and obliged the husband who was already prepared for it to throw himself in the struggle with greater zeal. Thus the movement having a personal touch promises to be carried on with energy. At its head is that seasoned soldier of Bâhar, the hero of many battles, Babu Brijkishore Prasad. I do not remember his having headed a movement that has been allowed to die.

The appeal fixes the 8th of July next as the date on which to inaugurate an intensive campaign against the system which puts a cruel ban on social service by one half of Bihar humanity and which denies it freedom in many cases and even the use of light and fresh air. The sooner it is realised that many of our social evils impede our march towards *Swaraj*, the greater will be our progress towards our cherished goal. To postpone social reform till after the attainment of *Swaraj* is not to know the meaning of *Swaraj*. Surely we must be incapable of defending ourselves or healthily competing with the other nations, if we allow the better half of ourselves to become paralysed.

I therefore congratulate the Bihar leaders on their having earnestly taken up the struggle against the *pardah*. The success of such a reform especially, as of all reform generally, depends upon the purity of the workers. A great deal will rest with the ladies who have signed the appeal. If, notwithstanding their having given up the *pardah*, they retain the original modesty of India's womanhood and show courage and determination in the face of heavy odds, they will find success quickly awaiting their effort. The campaign against the *pardah* if properly handled means mass education of the right type for both men and women of Bihar."

*Young India,*  
28th June, 1928."

(19) "*Pardah in Bihar*"

The organised demonstration against the *pardah* that was held in many important centres in Bihar on the 8th instant was, a Bihari friend's letter tells me, successful beyond the expectations of the organisers. The *Searchlight* report of the Patna meeting opens thus:

'A unique spectacle was witnessed at the mixed meeting of ladies and gentlemen of the 8th July held at Patna in the Radhika Sinha Institute on Sunday last. In spite of heavy rains that fortunately stopped just at the time of the meeting, the gathering was unexpectedly large. In fact half of the spacious hall of the Radhika Sinha Institute was crowded with ladies, three fourths of whom were such as had been observing *pardah* a day before, nay, an hour before.'

The following is the translation of the resolution adopted at the meeting:

'We, the men and women of Patna, assembled hereby declare that we have today abolished the pernicious practice of *pardah*, which has done and is doing incalculable harm to the country, and particularly to women, and we appeal to the other women of the province, who are still wavering, to banish this system as early as they can and thereby advance their education and health.'

A provisional committee was formed at the meeting to carry on an intensive propaganda against *pardah* and for the spread of women's education in the Province of Bihar. A third resolution advised the formation of *Mahila Samitis* in every town and every village of the Province. And a fourth resolution was passed to the effect that *Mahila Ashrams* should be started at different places where ladies might stay for certain periods and receive a training so as to become 'good wives,' 'worthy mothers' and 'useful servants' of the country. Over 5,000 rupees were promised on the spot for the purpose and I see many ladies among the donors, giving anything between Rs. 250 and 25. The paper published reports of similar meetings in several places in Bihar. If the campaign is well organised and continued with zeal, the *pardah* should become a thing of the past. It should be noted that this is no anglicising movement. It is an indigenous conservative effort made by leaders who are conservative by nature and are yet alive to all the evils that have crept into Hindu society. Babu Brijkishore Prasad and Babu Rajendra Prasad who, from far off London, is keenly watching and supporting the movement, are no westernised specimens of Indian humanity. They are orthodox Hindus, lovers of Indian cul-

ture and tradition. They are no blind imitators of the West and yet do not hesitate to assimilate whatever is good in it. There need therefore be no fear entertained by the timid and the halting ones that the movement is likely to be in any shape or form disruptive of all that is most precious in Indian culture and especially in feminine grace and modesty so peculiar to India's womanhood."

M.K.G.

*Young India,*  
26th July, 1928."

(20) *Note by Mahatma Gandhi on the death of Shri Mazharul Haque in December, 1929:—*

'Mazhar-ul-Haq was a great patriot, a good Mussalman and a philosopher. Fond of ease and luxury, when Non-Co-operation came he threw them off as we throw superfluous scales off the skin. He grew as fond of the ascetic life as he was of princely life. Growing weary of our dissensions, he lived in retirement, doing such unseen services as he could, and praying for the best. He was fearless both in speech and action. The *Sadikat Ashram* near Patna is a fruit of his constructive labours. Though he did not live in it for long as he had intended, his conception of the *Ashram* made it possible for the *Bihar Vidyapeeth* to find a permanent habitation. It may yet prove a cement to bind the two communities together. Such a man would be missed at all times, he will be the more missed at this juncture in the history of the country. I tender my condolences to Begum Mazhar-ul-Haq and her family."





*Congress leaders at the Hayapur Ashram breaking salt laws in 1930. The party was headed by Shri Borkhand Patel, who is with flag in his right hand.*

6902



Reception to Sir Firdaus Khan Pasha (now Speaker of the Bihar Legislative Assembly) on his return from the Hazaribagh Jail in 1932.

6902



Section 4

TOUR DURING THE EARTHQUAKE TRAGEDY  
AND ALSO FOR *HARIJAN* UPLIFT

(1) "Whilst anti-untouchability work is undoubtedly greater and its message of a permanent character, like all the chronic diseases, it can dispense with personal attention in the face of an acute case which that of Bihar is. He who is called by Rajendra Babu, the physician in charge, has to answer the call when made or not at all."

*Mahatma Gandhi on getting the news of the Bihar Earthquake of 1934.*<sup>1</sup>

(2) "There is one thing I want to say to you. Those of you who are getting work from the *Central Relief Committee* are in honour bound to work well. Do good honest work; and you who are not already working should do so. To give money, for bad work, or for no work, is to make beggars. And you must put away untouchability from your hearts and lives."

*Mahatma Gandhi's address to the people, who had assembled on his way to Chapra in March, 1934.*<sup>2</sup>

(3) "This is no time for talking. I have come to see and help you, and not talk. But there are two things I want to say to you. The first is this. The Relief Committees have the money, and either beggars or workers will take it. And I want no beggars. It would be deplorable, if this earthquake turned us into mendicants. Only those without eyes or hands, or feet, or otherwise unfit for work may ask for alms. For the able-bodied to beg is, in the language of the Gita, to become thieves.

1. Quoted in Verduffkar, *Mahatma*, Vol. III, p. 202.

2. Quoted in *Ibid.*, p. 311.

The second thing is this, that God has himself sent us this gift. We must accept it as a gift from Him and then we shall understand its meaning. What is that meaning? It is this, that untouchability must go, that is to say, nobody must consider himself higher than another.

If we can understand these two things, this earthquake will be turned into a blessing. At present we count it as a sorrow and no wonder when we see these fair fields and lands devastated. But I pray to God that He may give us strength to make a blessing out of this destruction."

(*Mahatma Gandhi's address to the people of Mathura, March, 1934*).<sup>1</sup>

(4) After visiting several places in the affected areas and comforting the afflicted people, Mahatma Gandhi, accompanied by Dr. Rajendra Prasad, Babu Mathura Prasad, Miss Lester, Mira Behn, Miss Agatha Harrison,<sup>2</sup> Shrimati Prabhavati Devi, Shrimati Bhagawati Devi, sister of Dr. Rajendra Prasad, Shrimati Kishun Devi, Shri Peyare Lal, Shri Prithi Raj and Shri Deva Raj (his Secretaries) went to Chapra and addressed there a mammoth meeting of more than 30,000 people on the 27th March: "Today," Mahatma Gandhi said there, "a terrible calamity has overwhelmed us all alike,—Hindus, Mussalmans, Christians and the rest, the so-called high-born and the low-born, without any favour or distinction. If even this terrible blow does not enable us to purge ourselves of pride of place and blood, to obliterate all the arbitrary, man-made distinctions between man and man, then I would only say that there is none so ill-fated as we. The conviction is growing upon me day after day that human intellect is incapable of fully understanding God's ways. God in His wisdom has circumscribed man's vision, and rightly too, for, otherwise man's conceit would know

1. Quoted in *Idid*, p. 312

2. Miss Agatha then visited India to study the Indian situation. She was a prominent Y. W. O. A. and Welfare worker and Secretary of the Indian Conciliation Group in London. She had come to India, a few years back, as Assistant to Miss Beryl Power, a member of the Royal Commission on Labour.

no bounds. But whilst I believe that God's ways cannot be comprehended fully by man, I have firm faith that not a leaf falls without His will, and not a leaf falls but it subserves His purpose. If only we had enough humility, we would have no hesitation in accepting the recent earthquake as a just retribution for our sins. This is not to say that we can with certainty attribute a particular calamity to a particular human action. Very often we are unconscious of our worst sins. All that I mean to say is that every visitation of nature does and should mean to us nature's call to introspection, repentance and self-purification. Today, more than ever, our hearts need a thorough cleansing and I would go so far as to say that even the earthquake would not be too great a price to pay, if it enabled India to cast out the canker of untouchability."<sup>1</sup>

(5) "This is my second visit to Dinapur. In your address you have remarked that on account of the havoc caused by the recent earthquake the *Harpas* uplift movement has been thrown to the background. This is all right. Whatever I told you during the course of my speech at Patna, I will again say that almost everybody in this world has suffered and even then the public will soon forget this great disaster caused by it. As we have completely forgotten the previous earthquakes in the history of this old world, and consider them as historic incidents, we will hold the same view about this earthquake also after a due course of time. But so long as untouchability exists we are reminded of our miseries. Some people consider untouchability as their religion, and if it disappears it would be a some sort of calamity to them. But if you look at it dispassionately it cannot be defended. Those also who call themselves *Saastanists* understand that untouchability is indefensible, and I think it is the staunchest class among *Saastanists* who hold the view. After this earthquake we ought to be more humble as death is inevitable. Therefore, those who feel sorry for this disaster may become humbler. God has warned us in this manner

1. Quoted in Trivedkar, *op. cit.*, Vol III, p. 313, *The Indian Nation*, 28th March, 1939

and if we do not pay heed to this warning some greater disaster is in store for us. The Śāstras lay down that complete destruction will overtake the whole creation some time. In the light of this divinal lesson we ought to become more humble and do away with the sin of untouchability. Those affected by the earthquake are more than a crore, but there are others in this Province who have escaped this disaster and who have lost nothing. Therefore they should subscribe as generously as people from outside the Province have done. In fact it is your duty as neighbours to subscribe to the relief funds.

Yesterday while we were discussing budget of that relief committee the whole sum amounted to forty lakhs, and yet certain things were left out. The total collections upto date are just about 20 lakhs. Distressed must get help from people and you must give your proper share by subscribing generously. Another thing I would draw your attention to is that workers will have to be brought from outside. In my opinion that is not the proper course. Biharis must supply enough number of workers and only call outside workers to assist them.<sup>124</sup>

*(Mahatma Gandhi's speech at Dinapur in March, 1934).*

(6) "I have to say a few words to the students also. They have not come forward as they ought to be. This has really grieved me. If you cannot show cause why students are unable to come forward, I can well understand it. But in fact there is little cause why they should not come. In my *Hogien* tour I had many opportunities to come into contact with students. They have expressed their intention to give spare time to whatever humanitarian task may be shown to them. Student community everywhere is alike. Therefore I hope that they will even now come forward and give their names to Rajen Babu. There are students from Calcutta who have come after leaving their own work simply to help us in this disaster.

Now as regards the relief problem. It is our determination to help those who have been struck hard, but you

1. *Indian Nation*, 28th March, 1934.



remember that we are not out to make beggars of them. Those who will work will get help in return. This is all that I have to say. The purse that has been given to me, I think, does not contain subscription from all those who are present here. Therefore I would appeal to them to pay their share also. I may make it clear that half of the entire money collected on the spot and given to me in the shape of a purse will go to *Harjan* movement and half of it to the Bihar Relief.<sup>1</sup>

(*Mahatma Gandhi's advice to the students of Bihar in March, 1934*).

(7) "I know what this part of Bihar has gone through. The sufferings of the people have drawn the attention and sympathy of the whole world. In spite of liberal response to the Viceroyal appeal and that of Babu Rajendra Prasad, it will be impossible to make good the tremendous losses suffered by north Bihar. But even if they were made good, it would be a very poor result of nature's recent terrible warning, if nothing more substantial were to come out of it. The donors of the two funds and the numerous other societies have perhaps satisfied their conscience by sending in their donation. Will the recipients be satisfied by merely receiving their share of the timely gifts? What is your reaction to the divine wrath? If you and I do not learn the moral lesson which the calamity teaches us, then that neglect will be worse than the calamity itself. Yesterday, as the car was passing along the Gandak embankment, I received a note from *Doms* of the village close by, telling me that they were suffering terribly from want of water, as the villagers would not allow them to take water from the common well. I drew the attention of the headman to the note and he promised to put the thing right, if it was found that their complaints were justified. God's wrath was felt equally by the rich and the poor, the Hindu and the Mussalman, the caste man and the outcaste. Shall we not learn from God's terrible impartiality that it is criminal to consider any human being un-touchable or lower than ourselves? If a single *Doms* or any other human being is denied use of the village wells, surely, the lesson of the 15th January will have been lost upon us.

I want to test you this very moment. I know you are all poor, earning bread by the sweat of your brows, but I know that there is in this vast crowd some so poor as not to be able to afford a pice. I want every one of you to contribute your coppers as a sign that you have repented of the sin of untouchability, that you do not consider any one lower than yourselves, and that in your own persons you are determined to abolish all distinctions of high and low. I do not want any of you to give me anything except on the condition I have made."

*(Mahatma Gandhi's speech on the platform of the Sarepur Railway Station from the doorway of his compartment, 28th March, 1934).*

(8) "Is it not shocking to regard the touch of a Mussalman or a Christian as unclean, even though he may be as truthful, God-fearing, pure, self-sacrificing and brave as any? God has created different faiths just as He has the votaries thereof. How can I even secretly harbour the thought that my neighbour's faith is inferior to mine? As a true and loyal friend, I can only wish and pray that he may live and grow perfect in his own faith. In God's house there are many mansions and they are all equally holy. All the great religions of the world inculcate the equality and brotherhood of mankind and the virtue of toleration. The 'touch-me not'ism that disfigures the present day Hinduism is a morbid growth. It only betrays a woodenness of the mind and a blind self-conceit. It is abhorrent alike to the spirit of religion and morality."

*(Mahatma Gandhi's speech at Sitamarhi, 29th March, 1934).<sup>1</sup>*

(9) "Nature utters its warning to us in a voice of thunder. .... It flashes it before our eyes in letters of flame. But seeing, we do not see and hearing, we do not understand."

*(Mahatma Gandhi's speech at Darbhanga, 30th March, 1934).<sup>2</sup>*

(10) "As I viewed the picture of ruin spread out before me at Rajnagar, I felt overwhelmed and crushed by the weight of human misery. But, then, I remembered Kunt's

1. Quoted in Tendulkar, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 313.

2. *Ibid.*

prayer, 'Oh Lord, send me misery and misfortune always, lest I forget thee.' It may not be given to all of us to have Kunti's Himalayan faith to utter that prayer. But may we not at least learn from it the lesson of using our calamities as a means of self-purification and turning the mind Godward?"

(*Mahatma Gandhi's speech at Madhabani, 31st March, 1934*)<sup>1</sup>

(11) "I have been touring in Bihar since the last several days. I have already seen the areas greatly affected by the earthquake. This tour will be over tomorrow evening. The scene was horrible. I can simply imagine the actual scene which you all have seen. Palaces and big houses collapsed within a minute or two. Water came out. I do not know what was then the scene at Bhagalpur.

The *Central Relief Committee* and the Government are co-operating to remove your distress but the relief is for those who have actually suffered. The Gita says that to eat without doing work is to commit theft. If money is to come from Government we should not sit idle. The Government and the *Relief Committee* should help the deserving people. What help can be given to the Maharaja of Darbhanga and Deep Babu for their losses? It is also not possible to help all persons. No matter whether help is given or not, people must do their duty. The complaint on behalf of the middle class has been received, but there are representatives of the middle class in the *Central Relief Committee*. I pray the middle class should forget their position as such and think that all are equal. All are human beings, God is the same for all. Difference is only with the animals. The *Central Relief Committee* has forgotten the difference but the middle class ought also to be helped. Suppose there are men who are thirsty, hungry, who want cloth, and who want houses to live in, whom to help first? No body can take the share of the thirsty. The thirsty ought to be helped first. Let the thirst of the men be quenched first, then help the hungry, then let cloth be given and lastly the houses constructed. We shall forget the earthquake in four months or in a year or two. If I come again I shall

1. *Ibid.*

be getting money from you all. Even to-day you give money to me. The people of Bihpur brought money. I told them if only they believed untouchability to be a sin of the Hindu society, they should subscribe for the funds I am raising. But they subscribed. Even the women caught hold of my feet to accept subscription. Purify yourselves. Untouchability is a social sin. No body is born untouchable. No Viceroy's fund or the *Central Relief Committee* can help you in this work. This is all that I had to say."<sup>1</sup>

(12) "During my tour of North Bihar I found that the inhabitants are in great need of water and therefore the first duty of the relief workers is to arrange for adequate water supply by constructing wells. I have seen Monghyr; not a single house is worth living in. No amount of money can fully repair the loss. I have co-operated with the Government and now I wait to see how far this co-operation meets with success. It is the duty of all the workers of the relief committees to work whole-heartedly in co-operation. I have entrusted Rajendra Prasad with the complete charge of the relief work and Rajendra Prasad is co-operating with Mr. Baett and assisting him in every way possible. I am told that the people of Monghyr are not satisfied with the town planning scheme. The people of this place prefer that the Government should only take over as much land as they require for constructing new roads leaving the remainder free for the private owners to construct their own houses. Mr. Rizvi has put up their resolutions to me. I have not been able to study them thoroughly yet. So I am unable to express my opinion on the Government's proposals or your desires. The relief workers state that a sum of rupees forty lakhs is required for making wells and constructing houses but at present I have got only twenty lakhs. Of these twenty lakhs, most of it will be spent in constructing wells.

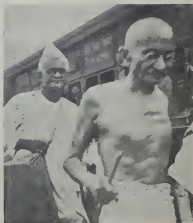
In my opinion this earthquake is the outcome of the social and personal sins of the people, but personal sins are not so great as social ones. It is my earnest desire that the

1. *The Indian Nation*, 6th April, 1934.



*Mahatma Gandhi with Shri Rajendra Prasad at Haripur (1934)*

6402



*Mahatma Gandhi with Shri Mathura Prasad alighting from the train at Brindaban on his way to attend a meeting of the Gandhi Seva Sangh at Brindaban (1939). Courtesy of Shri Mathura Prasad.*



*Mahesh Gandhi coming out of the residence of Sri Mahesh Prasad Sinha at Muzaffarpur in 1934. Others in the photo are (from the left) Mr. Harrison, After Study at Mr. Mohan Babu, Sri Mahesh Prasad Sinha, Sri Kamala Mohy of Muzaffarpur and Sri Kishore Narain (Principal, Muzaffarpur Law College).*

6402





higher class of people should remove untouchability and this is the object of my All-India tour."

(*Cast of the speech of Mahatma Gandhi at Monghyr on the 3rd April, 1934*).

(13) "Nothing can be more absurd than to suppose that the Biharis were specially marked by nature for its attention because they were more wicked than the rest. Misfortune is not a proof of an individual's weakness. All the same, there is an indissoluble connection between natural calamities and man's sin. You cannot have an interruption of the moral law in one part without producing a reaction in the entire system. When one limb is afflicted, through it the entire body is punished. Every calamity should, therefore, lead to a thorough cleansing of an individual as well as social life."

(*Mahatma Gandhi's speech at Monghyr, 3rd April, 1934*)<sup>1</sup>.

(14) "I have never been able to associate the black flags and *Sanskritam Dharmam* together in my mind. The combination seems so excruciatingly grotesque."\*\*\*\*\*"Let no one feel angry over the black flags or try to snatch away the flags from their owners. Mutual courtesy and respect was the foundation of culture."

(*Mahatma Gandhi's advice to the Sasatanists at Barker near Patna, April, 1934*).<sup>2</sup>

(15) "President, brothers and sisters, I am thankful to you that all of you are sitting quiet. You know I am weak but I shall try to speak loudly. You know that although being in such condition I did not feel any trouble in attending the meeting. If any body fights I cannot control, rather I am injured by that. At least one of my brothers had a motor car push and I felt it very much.

If any volunteer troubles any *Sasatanist* in that case I would not be able to check myself. I know that *Sasatanists* would obstruct my motor car and I would not like it and I would walk on foot. However God would help me, no body knows. If any brother wishes to kill me he can't. I

1. Quoted in Tendulkar, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 336.

2. *Ibid*

am 63 years old and there have been several instances like that, but God saved me. No body can do any thing to me. If any *Saastanist*, who is here, even if he keeps my head in his arms he cannot injure me.

If I consider a thing to be a religious one then how I can leave it!

I also consider myself to be a *Saastanist* and act according to my intellect which God has given me. I have asked *Saastanists* not to obstruct motor car or do any such act. My mission is that it is a sin to consider anybody low. God has created everybody in one kind.

Tulsidas observed himself to be low as well as several other saints observed like that. If anybody does not realize these things, it is not good for everybody who is known as a human being. *Harijans* have also got privilege to go in their temples. I want to overhaul your thoughts and have explained the facts."

*(Text of Mahatma Gandhi's speech at Bazar on the 25th April, 1934, as was recorded in a Police Report).*

(16) "It is a great pleasure to me to be able to revisit this holy place. My ancestors had visited it. But I admit that I was not fired with the same kind of motive that they had. You may not also know that this was one of the places where, on my return from South Africa to India, in 1915, I was invited to open the *Ashram*. During my last visit all the *Pandars* were volunteers, lavishing their affectionate services on me and my party. They knew that I had the same convictions about untouchability that I have today. They knew, too, that there was hardly any meeting at which I did not speak on untouchability in those days. But, on this occasion they are divided into two camps; one serving me and my party and the other, be it ever so small, rejecting me. I know it is not given to man to retain the affection of all men all time. It is, therefore, neither a matter for surprise nor sorrow that some of my old friends, the *Pandar*, I find in the opposite camp. But the manner of resistance is a matter for deep grief to me. I suppose they are responsible for the circulation of leaflets, full of half-truths and

untruths about myself, designed to wean the people from me. Decency of language has been thrown to the winds.

"I utterly disbelieve in methods of compulsion. I seek to bring people round to my view of truth by an appeal to their reason and to their hearts. I have tried, therefore, to discover the cause of the opposition and I have failed, unless it be that the public opinion is fast changing and untouchability is on its last lap and that therefore, by hook or by crook, my tour should be brought to a standstill, no matter how scrupulously fair my means may be of converting the Hindu opinion."<sup>1</sup>

*(Statement of Mahatma Gandhi regarding the demonstrations at Dargah in April, 1934).*

(17) "This statement was drafted by me on my day of silence at Sabara, that is, Easter Monday, 2nd instant. I passed it on to Rajendra Babu and then it was circulated among the friends who were present. The original draft has undergone considerable revision. It is also abridged. But in essence it remains as it was on Monday. I regret that I have not been able to show it to all friends and colleagues with whom I would have been delighted to share it. But as I had no doubt whatsoever about the soundness of my decision and as I knew that the civil resistance of some friends was imminent, I was not prepared to take the risk of delaying publication by waiting for the opinion of friends. The decision and every word of the statement are in answer to intense introspection, searching of the heart and waiting upon God. The decision carries with it reflection upon no single individual. It is a humble admission of my own limitations and a due sense of the tremendous responsibility that I have carried on my shoulders all these long years.

This statement owes its inspiration to a personal chat with the inmates and associates of the *Satyagraha Ashram* who had just come out of prison and whom, at Rajendra Babu's instance, I had sent to Bihar. More especially is it due to a revealing information I got in the course of a conversation about a valued companion of long standing who was found

1 Quoted in Tendulkar, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, pp. 328-329

reluctant to perform the full prison task and preferring his private studies to the allotted task. This was undoubtedly contrary to the rules of *Satyagraha*. More than the imperfection of the friend, whom I love more than ever, it brought home to me my own imperfection. The friend said he had thought that I was aware of his weakness. I was blind. Blindness in a leader is unpardonable. I saw at once that I must for the time being remain the sole representative of civil resistance in action.

During the informal conference week at Poona in July last I had stated that, while many individual civil resisters would be welcome, even one was sufficient to keep alive the message of *Satyagraha*. Now after much searching of the heart I have arrived at the conclusion that in the present circumstances only one and that myself and no other should, for the time being, bear the responsibility of civil resistance, if it is to succeed as a means of achieving *Purna Swaraj*.

I feel that the masses have not received the full message of *Satyagraha* owing to its adulteration in the process of transmission. It has become clear to me that spiritual instruments suffer in their potency when their use is taught through non-spiritual media. Spiritual messages are self-propagating. The reaction of the masses throughout the *Harpass* tour has been the latest forcible illustration of what I mean. The splendid response of the masses has been spontaneous. The workers themselves were amazed at the attendance and the fervour of vast masses whom they had never reached.

*Satyagraha* is a purely spiritual weapon. It may be used for what appear to be mundane ends and through men and women who do not understand its spirituality, provided the director knows that the weapon is spiritual. Everyone cannot use surgical instruments. Many may use them if there is an expert behind them directing their use. I claim to be a *Satyagraha* expert in the making. I have need to be far more careful than the expert surgeon who is complete master of his science. I am still a humble searcher. The very nature of the science of *Satyagraha* precludes the student from seeing more than the step immediately in front of him.

The introspection prompted by the conversation with the *Asaram* inmates has led me to the conclusion that I must advise all Congressmen to suspend civil resistance for *Swaraj* as distinguished from specific grievances. They should leave it to me alone. It should be resumed by others in my lifetime only under my direction, unless one arises claiming to know the science better than I do and inspires confidence. I give this opinion as the author and initiator of *Satyagraha*. Henceforth, therefore, all who have been impelled to civil resistance for *Swaraj* under my advice, directly given or indirectly inferred, will please desist from civil resistance. I am quite convinced that this is the best course in the interests of India's fight for freedom.

I am deadily in earnest about this greatest of weapons at the disposal of mankind. It is claimed for *Satyagraha* that it is a complete substitute for violence or war. It is designed, therefore, to reach the hearts both of the so-called "terrorists" and the rulers who seek to root out the "terrorists" by emasculating the whole nation. But the indifferent civil resistance of many, grand as it has been in its results, has not touched the hearts either of the "terrorists" or the rulers as a class. Unadulterated *Satyagraha* must touch the hearts of both. To test the truth of the proposition, *Satyagraha* needs to be confined to one qualified person at a time. The trial has never been made. It must be made now.

Let me caution the reader against mistaking *Satyagraha* for mere civil resistance. It covers much more than civil resistance. It means relentless search for Truth and the power that such a search gives to the searcher can only be pursued by strictly non-violent means.

What are the civil resisters, thus freed, to do? If they are to be ready for the call whenever it comes, they must learn the art and the beauty of self-denial and voluntary poverty. They must engage themselves in nation-building activities, the spread of *khaddar* through personal hand-spinning and hand-weaving, the spread of communal unity of hearts by irreproachable personal conduct towards one another in every walk of life, the banishing of untouchability in every shape or form in one's own person, the spread of total

abstinence from intoxicating drinks and drugs by personal contact with individual addicts and generally by cultivating personal purity. These are services which provide maintenance on a poor man's scale. Those for whom the poor man's scale is not feasible should find place in small unorganised industries of national importance which give better wages. Let it be understood that civil resistance is for those who know and perform the duty of voluntary obedience to law and authority.

It is hardly necessary to say that in issuing this statement I am in no way usurping the function of the Congress. Mine is mere advice to those who look to me for guidance in matters of *Satyagraha*."

*(Mahatma Gandhi's statement, dated Poona, the 7th April, 1934).*

BRINDABAN SESSION OF *GANDHI SEVA SANGH* (1939)

(1) "I shall choose as the text of my address today one or two things that I said in my statement issued on my departure from Rajkot. Kishorlal Mashruwala has rightly dwelt at length on the principal implication of *ahimsa*, namely, that *ahimsa* in us ought to soften and not to stiffen our opponent's attitude to us; it ought to melt him; it ought to strike a responsive chord in his heart. If the function of *ahimsa* is to devour all it comes across, the function of *ahimsa* is to rush in to the mouth of *ahimsa*. In an atmosphere of *ahimsa*, one has no scope to put his *ahimsa* to the test. It can be tested only in the face of *ahimsa*.

"I knew all this, and I have been trying to put it into practice, but I cannot say that I have done so always with success. And I cannot say that I have always succeeded in melting the hearts of my opponents. Rajkot brought a keener realization of this fact in my own mind. I was asking myself why we had failed so far in converting Durbas Virawala. The answer came straight to me that we had not dealt with him in the way of *ahimsa*. We had sworn at him, and I had shown indifference over the language of *Satyagrahis*. I may have controlled my tongue, but I had not put the similar control on the speech of others.

"The thing dawned on me as in a flash when during my interview with Mr. Gibson, the Resident, I made what he admitted was a sporting offer, of leaving it to the Thakore Sahib to form his own committee. It was then that I discovered what I have called the new technique. It is not without dangers, for the simple reason that I have had to cry a halt to everything that was going on. I had, during the struggle at Rajkot, sought the intervention of the

representative of the crown by approaching him during my fast, and since then I had been approaching the Resident, his representative in Rajkot. When I made the sporting offer, I wondered if I might not forget the paramount power and confine my attention to the state alone. But, perhaps, the courage for such a bold step is lacking. I have not yet made up my mind that I should not approach the paramount power in Rajkot affair, that I should ask the people to tear up the Gwyer Award, and start work with the State on a clean slate. My *Satyagraha* then would be addressed to the State alone, and I should lay down my life in the effort to convert the Rajkot authorities. Then all my experiments should be confined to that unique laboratory—Rajkot. These experiments would be more complete in terms of *Ahimsa*. At the root of my faint-heartedness, if it is that, is something lacking in my *ahimsa*.

"And now take the Congress corruption. Why should there be so much corruption in the Congress? How can we with all that corruption deserve the name 'Congressmen'? For, Gandhi is a mixture of good and evil, weakness and strength, violence and non-violence, but *ahimsa* has no adulteration. Now as '*ahimsa-itis*' can you say that you practise genuine *ahimsa*? Can you say that you receive the arrows of the opponent on your breast without returning them? Can you say that you are not angry, that you are not perturbed by his criticism? I am afraid many cannot say any such thing.

"You will answer back saying that you never claimed to practise *ahimsa* quite to that extent. If so, I will confess that to that extent my execution was defective. *Ahimsa* magnifies one's own defects, and minimises those of the opponent. It regards the mote in one's own eye as a beam and the beam in the opponent's eye as a mote. We have acted to the contrary.

"On the question of the States, we have wanted to reform their administration and to convert the rulers, not to destroy them. But our speech has often belied our profession.

"Though I made that statement about Rajkot, let me assure you that I am not going to leave Rajkot in the lurch, nor desert my co-workers and suffer them to be demoralised.



If I were to do so, it would be a sure sign of dotage, and I am aware of no such thing coming over me. On the contrary, I am praying that the workers there may grow every day in strength. I am only pleading for a radical change in the technique.

"Having said this, I now come to the policy of the *Gandhi Seva Sangh*. If you have followed what I have said so far, you have perhaps realized that we shall have to remodel ourselves. We shall have to examine ourselves critically and find out whether we have stood the test. If in doing so we are found wanting, it would be better to reduce our numbers. Twenty genuine members with a heart belief in truth and shunna are better than two hundred indifferent ones. They will one day drag us to destruction, the twenty may one day increase to two hundred genuine ones.

"Has not corruption crept into the *Sangh* too? Have not the members given way to hypocrisy, suspicion, mutual distrust? I do not know all the members, I know the names of only a few, and I am not speaking from personal knowledge. I am speaking from limited experience. Jammalalji is unfortunately not here today. He has very often shared with me his experience of many institutions with which he is connected. Why should it be difficult to run them smoothly? Why cannot we, with any amount of confidence, fling our workers from one part of the country to another to take charge of the work there?

"All this I say not to find fault with you, but in order to drive home the necessity of discipline and strict observance of our own principles. A *Satyagrahi* should have a living faith in God. That is because he has no other strength but that of his unflinching faith in Him. Without that faith how can he undertake *Satyagraha*? I would ask any of you who feels that he has no such faith to leave the *Gandhi Seva Sangh*, and to forget the name of *Satyagraha*.

"How many of you have a living faith in the spinning wheel? Do you believe in it as a symbol of non-violence? If we had that faith, our spinning would have a potency all its own. Spinning is even more potent than civil dis-

obedience. The latter may provoke anger and ill will, spinning provokes no such feeling. My faith in the spinning wheel I declared twenty years ago. I am declaring it again with the added strength of my twenty years' experience. If you feel you have no such faith, I would again ask you to forget *Satyagraha*.

"Shri Prajapati Misra said that he had been able to introduce some spinning wheels in villages within a radius of five miles from here. What is there in this to be proud of? Laxmi Baba has organized a good exhibition, but there was nothing there to send me into raptures. Bihar which boasts of so many good workers should have no home without a spinning wheel. We can change the face of Bihar, if we all know what a potent force the spinning wheel is. I am not talking of the thousands of our starving sisters who must spin for their bread, but I am talking of those who profess to believe in truth and non-violence. The moment they realize that spinning is the symbol of non-violence it will serve as a beacon light to them; it will inspire all their conduct; they will regard all waste of time as criminal, their language will be free of all offensive expression, they will not think an idle thought.

"By itself, the wheel is a lifeless thing, but it becomes a living thing when we attribute certain virtues to it. Even Ramanam is by itself lifeless, but it has become a living symbol of the deity because millions upon millions of people have consecrated it. Even a sinner may turn the wheel and add to the nation's wealth. I know people who have told me that the music of spinning wheel has stilled their lust and other passions.

"And, it is because I have invested the spinning wheel with that power, that it has become so essential to the *Satyagraha* of my conception in India. When I wrote *Hind Swaraj* in 1909, I had not even seen a spinning wheel. In fact, I had even mistaken a loom for a spinning wheel. But, even then, it was for me a symbol of non-violence. Let me, therefore, repeat that I do not want people to launch *Satyagraha*, if they have no such belief in the spinning wheel. They may offer *Satyagraha* on their own, but I could be of no use to them.

"Now as regards the question of corruption in the Congress, the best way in which we can help to eradicate corruption is by purifying ourselves. The problem in its organizational aspect will have to be tackled by the Congress. For, truth and non-violence are no less articles of its creed than yours. The Congress can change it; you may not.

"I come now to what is called the 'Gandhian' ideology and the means of propagating it. Propagation of truth and non-violence can be done less by books than by actual living on those principles. Life truly lived is more than books. I do not say that we may not issue books and newspapers. I only say that they are not indispensable. If we are the true devotees of truth and *ahimsa*, God will endow us with the requisite intellect to solve problems. That devotion presupposes the will to understand our opponent's viewpoint. We must make a sincere effort to enter into his mind and to understand his viewpoint. That is what is meant by non-violence walking straight into the mouth of violence. If we are armed with that attitude of mind, we may hope to propagate *ahimsa* principles. Without that, book and newspaper propaganda is of no avail. You do not know with what indifference I used to run *Young India*. I did not shed a single tear when *Young India* had to be stopped. But *satyagraha*, which it was intended to help, survived it. For, *satyagraha* does not depend on the outside help, it derives all its strength from within."

*(Speech of Mahatma Gandhi at the 3rd session of the Gandhi Seva Sangh, held at Brundaban (Champanar) in November, 1939).*

## RAMGARH CONGRESS

(1) "I am pleased to have been here to hear all these discussions today. When I see that all those, who have spoken, had the word '*Civil Disobedience*' on their tongue, I am reminded of the Biblical saying: 'Not every one that saith to Me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven: but he that doth the will of My Father who is in Heaven, he shall enter the kingdom of Heaven'

It is not those, who shout the word '*Civil Disobedience*', that can launch *civil disobedience*. It is only those who work for *civil disobedience* that are capable of launching the movement. Real *civil disobedience* makes it binding on those who join it to do what they are enjoined to do and avoid what is prohibited. *Civil disobedience* properly launched and conducted is bound to lead to freedom.

I feel you are not prepared. It is true that we all know and realise that we are slaves in our own land. We also realise that freedom is essential for us. Further we all realise that we will have to fight for freedom. I may also join you in applauding the speakers who have demanded immediate launching of *civil disobedience*. A thief has come and turned me out of my house. I will have to fight him and get it back, but before I can do this, I must be prepared (applause). Your claps only demonstrate that you do not understand what this preparation means. Your General finds that you are not ready, that you are not real soldiers and that if we proceed on the lines suggested by you, we are bound to be defeated.

I must make it clear that I am not prepared to do anything for which I will have to repent. I have never acknowledged defeat throughout all these years in any of my strug-

gles. Though some people may point out to Rajkot, but I maintain that it was not a defeat for me. Future history alone can make this clear.

I can assure you and I promise you and publicly announce it, that when you are ready I shall march forth and then I have no doubt about victory. I said this before the Subjects Committee and I repeat it again here. Purify your mind and heart. Some people here have been asserting that it is not necessary for us to concentrate on the *Charākh* before launching a fight. I do not doubt their sincerity and bravery, but, as Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru has told you, they betray certain weakness of mind. For twenty years I have been preaching that without the *Charākh*, *Satyagraha* cannot be started. Deciders want me to leave the *Charākh*. But I am devoting greater attention to it, because I have to prepare myself. No one, who does not believe in the *Charākh*, can be a soldier under me. He will be deceiving himself, me and the world.

With me there is no other alternative than non-violence. If you feel that you are to fight and you must fight now and immediately and feel convinced that there is some other method of winning the fight, I would ask you to go ahead and I shall be the first to applaud your victory. But if you do not want to leave me and yet are not prepared to follow my methods and instructions, then I would like to know what kind of generalship is this that you offer me.

Those who clamour for immediate launching of *Civil Disobedience* want to have me with them, why, because they are conscious that the masses are with me. I unhesitatingly say that I am the people's man. Every moment of my life I feel for the starving millions. I live and am prepared to lay down my life to relieve their sufferings and mitigate their miseries. I claim to have some influence with the millions, because I have been a faithful servant of theirs. Even if you stone me to death I will still work for the masses. This is my way. If you think there is any other way please leave me alone.

Without *Charākh* I cannot lead you to jail in the course of the fight for freedom. I will not have any one under me

who does not believe in the *Charkha*. I shall go ahead only when I am satisfied that you have faith and belief in the *Charkha*. Remember if we, who are assembled here, blunder, we shall cause untold suffering to the dumb millions by our mistake. The delegates to the Congress bear a heavy responsibility and as your General my responsibility is still greater. As a general I have to be a sort of beacon light to you and warn you against possible disaster. Therefore, have I to proceed cautiously.

Many speakers dilated on the evils of British Imperialism. I do not wish to elaborate that point except to state that we must get rid of it. I have told you the clue. Before I agree to launch *Satyagraha*, I must be convinced that you have understood my remedy.

It is no use going to a doctor and asking for a medicine if you do not propose to take it according to his instructions. I would much rather ask you to seek another doctor for your ailment. All the sermons you have heard to-day against British Imperialism will not help you to remove it. They will only make you angry. This will not solve our problem. Anger is opposed to *Satyagraha*. We have no quarrel with the British people. We want to be their friends and retain their goodwill, not on the basis of their domination, but on the basis of a free and equal India.

As a free country India will bear no malice to anyone, nor attempt to enslave any people. We shall march with the rest of the world, just as we shall desire the rest of the world to march with us.

*Satyagraha* is the path of truth at all costs. If you are not prepared to follow this path please leave me alone. You can pronounce me worthless and I shall not resent it. If I do not make this clear here and now, I shall be ruined and along with the country. Truth and *Ahimsa* are the essence of *Satyagraha* and the *Charkha* is their symbol. Just as the General of any army insists that his soldiers should wear a particular uniform, I, as your General, must insist on your taking to the *Charkha* which will be your uniform. Without full faith in truth, non-violence and the *Charkha*, you cannot be my soldiers. And I repeat again that if you do not believe in

this, you must leave me alone and you can try your own methods."

(*English translation of the speech of Mahatma Gandhi in Hindustani at the Ramgarh session of the Congress after the Resolution on the War Crisis had been adopted*).

(2) "I have come to you to meet you and renew my acquaintance with you, and also give you an opportunity to meet me and find out whether there has been any change in me. I have been in public life for full fifty years. I have been in charge of various organisations and come in contact with millions of people. Besides I have been in contact with the *Working Committee* and many of you have been in correspondence with me. It should, therefore, not be difficult for me to remember you.

All the same I wanted to establish direct contact and know where we stand in relation to each other. I notice that you have made considerable progress in the art of debate. I congratulate you on that, for, a democratic organisation does need people who can express themselves clearly and maintain a high level of discussion. I also find that the number of amendments you move has increased. That too is good because we want new ideas. It is good that various points of view should be presented before the public so that if any point that is not accepted to-day may be accepted tomorrow.

You have adopted this resolution almost unanimously. Only seven or eight among you dissented. They had every right to do so. The passing of this resolution adds to my responsibility, because I was present at the time of discussion. If wanted I had an opportunity to place my view before you but the *Working Committee* felt that I should not do so before the resolution had been disposed of and consented.

I do not want to reply to what has been said by some of you in the course of the debate. I want to tell you, however, that there have been occasions in the past when I agreed to launch a movement although some of the conditions laid down by me had not been fulfilled, but on this

occasion I am going to be very strict, not because I want to be hard but because I want you to realise that the general who has to lead the fight must let his army know his conditions for leading them.

This time I find that the difficulties you would have to face are much greater than those we were faced with on former occasions. These are of two kinds, external and internal. We have declared very clearly what we want. We have made it so clear that further clarification is not possible. Similarly the British Government have also made clear their point of view. Britain is involved in a World War and naturally if we oppose it at this time it will mean trouble. This is the first difficulty. But our real difficulty is an internal one. I have written on several occasions that in *Giri Desobedience* one need not be afraid of external difficulties if the fight is carried on proper lines.

Our internal difficulty is that we have a large number of Congress members on our Register. People have joined us because they find that the Congress has acquired power. Many people who did not join the Congress before have now joined it. They have harmed it because they have joined perhaps with selfish motives. In a democratic organisation we cannot prevent such people from joining unless our organisation is so strong that sheer weight of public opinion would compel them to remain out.

That cannot happen so long as our contact with primary Congress members is only for voting purpose. There is no discipline in the Congress. There are a number of groups and there are quarrels and squabbles. We seem not to believe in non-violence as regards own internal organisation. Wherever I go I hear the same complaint. My conception of democracy is not the formation of groups quarrelling with one another to such an extent as would destroy the organisation itself. Again we are not only a democratic organisation. We are also a fighting organisation. Our fight is not yet over. When we march as an army, we are no longer a democracy. As soldiers we have got to take orders from the General and obey them implicitly. His words must be law. I am your General. It should not mean that I should





*During debate at the Rangoon Congress (1940)*



*Reception at the Exhibition, Rangoon Congress*

6902



6902



*At the A.I.V.P.A. Exhibition, Rangoon Congress.*





keep you in dark regarding my feelings. I do not know of any General in history who was so powerless as I am. I have no sanctions. My only sanction is love. In one way it is a great thing but in another sense it can also be worthless. I can say I cherish love for all in my heart. Perhaps you also do so but your love must be active. You must fulfil the conditions set down in the *Independence Pledge*. You must allow me to tell you that if you do not fulfil those conditions it will not be possible for me to launch a struggle. You will have to find another General. You cannot compel me to lead you against my will. When you appoint me as your General, you must obey my command. There can be no argument about it. Because my only sanction is love, I argue with you, for love must be characterised by patience. I have heard friends criticising the *Charitra*. I know you are all ready to go to jail but you must earn the right and pay the price for going to jail. You will not be going to jail as criminals.

This condition about *Charitra* and *Khadi* has been there since 1921. Our programme and policy have been the same all these days. You might have grown wise in this matter since then, but I must tell you I have not. The more I think about non-violence, the greater virtues I find in it.

I have been an outlaw since 1918. Before that I was so loyal to the Empire that I wrote to Lord Chelmsford that I longed to have the same loyalty towards the Empire as a Britisher has in his heart. I wrote those words because I am a believer in truth. Truth is my God and I could not have written anything else if I wanted to be true to myself.

You may have other ways than truth and non-violence, but mine is the same old path and, being just a human being like you, I also commit mistakes. Never have I dreamt that I am a *Mahatma*. We are all equals in the eyes of God. To me Hindus, Muslims, Parsis, *Marjans* are all alike. I cannot be frivolous when I talk of Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah. He is my brother. I would be happy indeed if he could keep me in his pocket. There was a time when I could say that there was no Muslim whose confidence I did not enjoy. It

is my misfortune that it is not so today. I do not read all that appears in the Urdu Press, but perhaps I get a lot of abuses there. I am not sorry for it. I still believe that without Hindu-Muslim settlement there can be no *Swraj*. You will perhaps ask in that case why do I talk of fight. I do so because it is to be a fight for the Constituent Assembly. If Muslims who come to the Constituent Assembly through Muslim votes declare that there is nothing common between Hindus and Muslims, then alone I would give up all hope, but even then I would argue with them because they read the *Koran* and I have also studied something of that *Holy Book*. I will tell them that God makes no distinction between Hindus and Muslims. When Lord Zetland was wounded I was deeply pained. I felt as if I was myself wounded. These are my ways. You call them weakness. If you want me you must understand this. It is my constant endeavour to create good-will in the opponent's mind. I fight British Imperialism but I have no quarrel with those who run the Imperialist machine. I do not want to destroy them but I want to bring about a change in them.

You must know that compromise is in my very being. I will go to the Viceroy fifty times if there is need for it. When I was fighting General Smuts, at the very last moment I telephoned to him to try and see if the fight could be abandoned. He put down the receiver in anger. I was not sorry because thereby he did not insult me and you know we are now great friends. If you have suspicion that I will compromise, you must believe that the compromise will not be at the cost of the country. I will not sell India. Whatever I do I do to increase the strength of our country. The basis of my fight is love for the opponent. If I had no love in my heart for the Dutch and the English I would not have been able to fight them in South Africa.

Somebody has suggested that the word "mass" does not appear in the resolution in reference to *civil disobedience*. If it is not to be *mass civil disobedience* why should I come to you? If it were to be done by a handful of people you would not find me here arguing with you. You might perhaps not be taking those things seriously. But in my mind

there is no other thought. My mind is wholly concentrated on trying this great experiment with your help and support, because it will not only benefit India but the whole world.

Every Congress Committee must therefore become a unit of *Satyagraha*. To that extent, democracy comes to an end. To that extent democratic organisation like ours will have to follow implicitly my instruction. If that does not happen, millions of people who follow us will be sacrificed. I will not allow that to happen. I may have to lay down my life for preserving the power that has accrued to India. You may not be able to analyse that power but it is there. It is the power of *Ahimsa*.

I do not want to come in if there is anyone who wants to launch a struggle. But he can do so outside the Congress. If he wants to remain in the Congress he must follow the Congress programme and policy. Of course it is possible for anyone to remain in the Congress and yet disobey it, but that won't be the way of *Satyagraha* which never harms the man who uses the weapon. The passing of the resolution does not bind you yet. It is still open to you to reverse it. You may have other methods, but so far as I am concerned I have only the same old programme. I know that method has never harmed anyone who has followed it and even now if I can get your whole-hearted support and co-operation, I can show you what can be achieved within even a month."

(*English translation of Mahatma Gandhi's speech in Hindustani at the Subjects Committee of the Indian National Congress at Rangoon*).

*Section 7*

MESSAGES OF PEACE AND HARMONY  
IN THE CRUCIAL YEARS, 1946-47.

(1) On the morning of November 6, 1946, just on the eve of starting for Noakhali, Mahatma Gandhi issued a statement, addressed "To Bihar":

"Bihar of my dreams seems to have falsified them. I am not relying upon the reports that might be prejudiced or exaggerated. The continued presence of the Central Chief Minister and his colleague furnishes an eloquent tale of the tragedy of Bihar. It is easy enough to resort that the things under the Muslim League Government in Bengal were no better if not worse, and that Bihar is merely a result of the latter. A bad act of one party is no justification for a similar act by the opposing party, more especially when it is rightly proud of its longest and largest political record.

I must confess, too, that although I have been in Calcutta for over a week, I do not yet know the magnitude of Bengal tragedy. Though Bihar calls me, I must not interrupt any programme for Noakhali. And is counter communalism any answer to the communalism of which Congressmen have accused the Muslim League? Is it nationalism to seek barbarously to crush the fourteen per cent of the Muslims in Bihar?

I do not need to be told that I must not condemn the whole of Bihar for the sake of the sins of a few thousand Biharis. Does not Bihar take credit for one Brajkishore Prasad or one Rajendra Babu? I am afraid, if the misconduct in Bihar continues, all the Hindus of India will be condemned by the world. That is its way, and it is not a bad way either. The misdeeds of Bihari Hindus may justify Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah's taunt that the Congress is a Hindu organization, in spite of its boast that it has in its ranks a few



Sikhs, Muslims, Christians, Parsis and others. Biharî Hindus are in honour bound to regard the minority Muslims as their brethren requiring protection, equal with the vast majority of Hindus. Let not Bihar, which has done so much to raise the prestige of the Congress, be the first to dig its grave.

I am in no way ashamed of my *shikhsa*. I have come to Bengal to see how far in the nick of time my *shikhsa* is able to express itself in me. But I do not want in this letter to talk of *shikhsa* to you. I do want, however, to tell you that what you are reported to have done will never count as an act of bravery. For thousands to do to death a few hundreds is no bravery. It is worse than cowardice. It is unworthy of nationalism and of any religion. If you had given a blow against a blow, no one would have dared to point a finger against you. What you have done is to degrade yourselves and to drag down India.

You should say to Pandit Jawaharlalâ, Sardar Nighar Sahib and Dr. Rajendra Prasad to take away their military and themselves and attend to the affairs of India. This they can only do, if you repent of your inhumanity and assure them that the Muslims are as much your care as your own brothers and sisters.

You should not rest, till every Muslim refugee has come back to his own home, which you should undertake to rebuild and ask your Ministers to help you to do so. You do not know what critics have said to me about your Ministers.

I regard myself as a part of you. Your affection has compelled that loyalty in me. And since I claim to have better appreciation than you seem to have shown of what the Biharî Hindus should do, I cannot rest till I have done some measure of penance. Predominantly for the reasons of health, I had put myself on the lowest diet possible soon after my reaching Calcutta. That diet now continues as a penance after the knowledge of the Bihar tragedy. The low diet will become a fast unto death, if the erring Biharis have not turned over a new leaf.

There is no danger of Bihar mistaking my act for anything other than pure penance as a matter of sacred duty.

No friend should run to me for assistance or to show sympathy. I am surrounded here by loving friends. It would be wholly wrong and irrelevant for any other person to copy me. No sympathetic fact or semi-fact is called for. Such action can only do harm. What my penance should do is to quicken the conscience of those who know me and believe in my bona fides. Let no one be anxious for me. I am like all of us in God's keeping.

Nothing will happen to me, so long as He wants service through the present tabernacle."

(1) Mahatma Gandhi hoped that the "Bihar Hindus will not be guilty of self-righteousness by saying that the Biharis, who had forgotten in a fit of insanity that they were human beings, were drawn from the good elements and for whom the Congressmen of Bihar could not be held responsible. If they adopted the attitude of self-righteousness they would reduce the Congress to a miserable party, whereas the Congress claimed and he had repeated the claim in London at the time of the Round Table Conference he had attended, that of all the organisations in India the Congress was the only one organisation which rightfully claimed to represent the whole of India or Portuguese India or the State India, because the Congress claimed by right of service to represent not only the nominal Congressmen or its sympathisers but also its enemies. Therefore the Congress had to make itself responsible for the misdeeds of all communities and all classes. It should be its proud privilege to better and improve the moral, material and physical condition of the whole of India to entitle it to the proud claim it had made ever since its existence. As a matter of fact, it would be wrong even to say that there was not a single Congressman involved in the mad upheaval.

"That many Congressmen," Mahatma Gandhi continued, "had staked their lives in order to save their Muslim friends and brethren was no answer to the charge that was justly hurled against the Bihar Hindus by indignant and injured Muslims who did not hesitate to describe the Bihar crime

as having no parallel in history. If he was so minded, he would be able to show that there were to be found in history examples of human monsters having done crimes even worse than those of the Hindus of Bihar. But he did not want to be guilty of making comparisons and weigh the greatness of crimes in golden scales. On the contrary a truly repentant man would never want to flatter himself by even thinking that he was not as bad as his predecessors."

"There was a legitimate place for rivalry," added Mahatma Gandhi, "in doing good and out-doing one's predecessors and one's own labours in the act of service. He was, therefore, grieved to find that there were thoughtless Hindus in all parts of India who falsely hugged the belief that Bihar had arrested the growth of lawlessness that was to be witnessed in Noakhali. He wished to remind them in forceful terms that that way of thinking and doing was the way to perdition and slavery, never to freedom and bravery. It was a cowardly thing for a man to believe that barbarity such as was exhibited could ever protect a civilisation or a religion, or defend freedom. He was able to say from recent first-hand knowledge that where there was cowardice on the one hand there was cruelty on the other. The way, therefore, to take reprisals upon Noakhali was to learn how not to copy the barbarous deeds such as Noakhali had proved itself capable of but to return barbarism by manliness which consisted in daring to die without a thought of retaliation and without in any way compromising one's honour. He warned the audience and through them the whole of India that if they really wished to see India independent in every sense of the term they must not imitate barbarous methods. Those who resorted to such methods would find that they were retarding the day of India's deliverance."

*(Post-Prayer speech of Mahatma Gandhi at the Bankipur Maidan—now called the Gandhi Maidan—in the evening of the 3th March, 1947).*

(2) Mahatma Gandhi began by saying that "he had no doubt in his mind that a religious ceremony like the *Holi* should never be marked by wild revelry, but by a disciplined effort to put oneself in communion with God."

"There was a time," he continued, "when the Hindus and the Mussalman lived side by side as peaceful neighbours. If things had today come to such a pass that they could not look upon one another as friends, let them at least not behave as enemies. There was fear among the Mussalmans that the occasion of the *Holi* might be marked by renewed attacks upon them. It was surprising that he was hearing from them what he had heard from the Hindus in Noakhali and Tipperah and he felt ashamed to have to listen to the same tales in Patna as in Noakhali. He would, therefore, venture to say to his Muslim brothers in Bihar what he had said to the Hindus in Noakhali, viz, that they should shed all fear of man and trust God; but he knew that it was a counsel of perfection.

Cries of *Vande Mataram*, *Jai Bharat* or *Jai Hind* frightened the Mussalmans today. Were the shouts of *Bharat ki Jai* going to mean *Mussalman ki Khat*? It was a matter of shame that things had been brought to such a pass. He had been meeting several *Muslim League* friends, who, he felt, had opened their hearts before him and asked him if the Mussalmans would not really be allowed to remain in a Province like Bihar. The Muslim friends who were in the Congress like Dr. Syed Mahmud had also expressed their uneasiness at the present situation. This terrorization of brother by brother, if it were true, was unbearable for him. Were they really going to commit one act of madness by another. In that event India could only be drowned in a sea of blood."

Mahatma Gandhi was firmly of the opinion that "this could never be our fate if we were determined to have it otherwise. His hope lay more in womenkind who, he had ever maintained, were the living embodiment of *ahimsa* and self-sacrifice, without which *ahimsa* could never be a reality." Mahatma Gandhi wanted everyone "to celebrate the *Holi* in such a manner that every single Muslim felt that the Hindus had not only repented for what had been done to them but had also gathered love for them to an extent which outdid their previous sentiments. If the *Holi* was



*Mahatma Gandhi visiting a ruined village in Madras P.S. (1947)*

6902



6402



*Mahatma Gandhi et Karamchar near Paris with Prof.  
Abdel Bari (March, 1947).*









Mahatma Gandhi in Bihar in 1947

4343



*Mahatma Gandhi visiting the lower portion of a ruined house in Marashti P.S. (1947)*

6902



marked by this revival of the old friendly relations then indeed it would be a truly religious celebration."

There was one thing more which Mahatma Gandhi wanted to tell his audience in the hope that justice would be done wherever his voice could reach. It had been conveyed to him that there were Muslim women even now kept perforce in Hindu homes. "If that were true and if, of course, such women were still living, he would expect every one of them to be restored to their homes. The miscreants should show true repentance and every Hindu should consider it his duty to impress upon them that they should repent and courageously face punishment for their misdeeds. If that were too much for them, he would at least expect the women to be restored to him or to Rajendra Babu in perfect safety.

It was not enough that the Hindus should express lip repentance or compensate the sufferers by means of money. What was really needed was that their hearts should become pure and, in place of the hatred or indifference which was sweeping over them, love should reign so that under its glow every single Muslim man, woman and child felt perfectly secure and free to pursue his or her religious practices without the least let or hindrance. Let us all make the *Raft* an occasion for the initiation of this relation between the two sister communities."

(*Mahatma Gandhi's post-Prayer speech at the Bankipur Maidan on the evening of the 6th March, 1947*).

(3) Mahatma Gandhi began his address this evening by saying that "just before starting for the prayer ground he had taken a brief rest. The whole of his waking hours during the day had been spent in listening to the reports and the accounts brought in by many Muslim and Hindu friends. None of them had been able to assure him that things had completely settled down to complete normality. This had fatigued him mentally and hence he needed rest."

"The ideal of the *Sikshapriya* (man whose understanding is secure) described in the second chapter of the *Gita* was always before him and he was ceaseless in his efforts to

reach that ideal. Whatever others might say of him, he knew he was yet far from it. When one really reaches such a state, his very thought becomes charged with a power which transforms those around him. But whence was that power in him now? He could only say that he was a common mortal, made of the same clay of which others were made, only ceaselessly striving to attain the lofty ideal which the Gita held before all mankind.

It was because his thoughts reached tonight only those brothers and sisters who had perhaps not direct influence upon the rioters that he had been seriously thinking if he should not march from village to village in the manner of Neakhal, so that what little power his thoughts contained might be conveyed directly to the most distant villages who had done a wrong to his brother Mussalman.

Bihar was the land of Tukidas' *Ramayana*. However uneducated or poor a Bihar, might be his voice ever rang with the music of the mighty epic. He knew what was sin and what was also meant by religious merit. The misdeeds which had come out of his hands had been of terrible proportions. Should not then his *prapanchitis* (atonement) be of the same order? There was a saying: 'The greater the sinner, the greater the saint.' It was in this spirit that they should approach those who had suffered at their hands and try to do the right by them.

He had said last evening that all Muslim women who are alleged even now to be confined in Hindu homes should be returned. It would indeed be a brave thing if the miscreants came forward and openly confessed their sins and were prepared to bear all punishment justly meted out to them. But restore the girls to him without any fear of harm coming to them. There was however one thing more he would like them to do. It had been reported that property worth about a crore of rupees had been looted or destroyed. It did not matter what the exact figure was. For, if a man was deprived of a couple of rupees when he had only that amount it means that he had lost his all. It became then the duty of every Hindu to see that the looted property was returned and losses compensated for wherever they had

occurred in the Province. If the men concerned were no longer living, the restored property or the compensation should at least reach the surviving relatives.

This much he could surely expect from *Biharis* who lived in the land of the *Ramajanas* and who tried to set their lives in accordance with the teachings of that noble book."

(*Mahatma Gandhi's post-Prayer speech on the 7th March, 1947*).

(4) Mahatma Gandhi said at the prayer meeting that "he hoped the audience would forgive him for speaking always and exclusively on the theme which had brought him to Bihar. It had become his duty to listen to the tale of woe that the Muslim sufferers unfolded before him from day to day. One of them had come to him and complained that, even so recently as two days ago, things were pilfered from Muslim houses. If such was the case, it was most unfortunate and if it was at all general, it betrayed a lack of the spirit of repentance without which there was no possibility of concord between the two communities in Bihar, indeed in the whole of India.

The speaker, therefore, expressed his surprise that he had received a telegram warning him that he must not condemn the Hindus in Bihar, for, what they had done was purely from a sense of duty. He had no hesitation in saying that the writer did no good to India or to Hinduism by issuing the warning. He spoke as a Hindu having a living faith in his own religion and he claimed to be a better Hindu for claiming to be a good Muslim, Christian, Parsi or Jew even as he was a Hindu. He invited everyone of his audience to feel likewise. And as such, he would forfeit his claim to be a Hindu if he bolstered up the wrong doing of fellow Hindu or any other fellow being.

He claimed to do them a service by opening their eyes to their wrong-doing. They must not be carried away by the mischief, for instance, which was being done in the Punjab. If they were qualifying themselves as free citizens of India become free, they must not resort to wrong-doing on hearing of the wrong perpetrated in other parts of India.

or anywhere else. Their and his duty was to imitate and assimilate whatever was good, no matter where found.

Now that he had been four days among them, he ventured to draw their attention to the duty they owed to themselves and to the distressed Muslims, viz., that they should pay whatever they could towards the relief of the sufferers. He, therefore, invited them to give whatever they could towards that cause by way of a token of repentance. It was unfortunate that he had to remind them of the obvious thing. Many Hindu donors sent him donations for the sufferers in Noakhali, which he thought amounted to nearly three lakhs of rupees. Having received the reminder, he hoped that they would come forth with handsome donations. Naturally, every pit spent would be accounted for. They should not deceive themselves into the belief that now that they had a representative Government, they would do everything in the way of finances.

The more democratic a government the more it laboured under disadvantages in making use of public funds. Therefore, in a well ordered society, the legitimate limitations which Government suffered from were only crossed by wise public donation."

*(Mahatma Gandhi's post-Prayer speech on the 8th March, 1947).*

(5) "It is good that I have one day of silence in the week. And how beautiful it would be, if everyone could spend at least a few hours in the day in silent introspection, if it were not possible for them to spend one whole day in complete silence! If the people were accustomed to such spiritual exercise, their hands could never have been stained by the deeds which have actually taken place in Bihar. But this is not the occasion for dilating upon the benefits of the practice of silence.

Today, it is my object to indicate in brief the duty of those who did not personally participate in the shameful killings, which took place in this Province. Their first duty is to purify their thoughts. When the thoughts are not pure, one's action can never be purified. Pure action can never come from imitation. If one tries to become good by merely



imitating the good conduct of the others, such conduct can never succeed in radiating any influence upon the others, because it is after all not the true stuff. But one whose heart has become also really pure along with his actions, can at once sense the true character of the thoughts which influence the behaviour of his neighbours. When the thoughts and actions both have become pure, there can be no repetition of the deeds which have marred the fair face of Bihar. But the world never progresses in a straight line. The thoughts and the actions of men never follow a parallel and uniform course. For all men, these two can never be completely purified at any single point of time.

Therefore, I would wish to indicate tonight only that ideal of duty which the workers should keep before themselves, if workers are available in sufficiently large numbers. It should be their first duty to explain clearly to the miscreants the full consequence of their misdeeds. It should be explained to the wrongdoers that such deeds can never be of any good to them personally, nor can they serve the cause of Hinduism or of the country. It should be explained to them that they have not been able to harm those whom they intended. They should also be induced to come forward and confess openly their misdeeds before public. They should also restore looted property and abducted women to the proper quarters.

A change of heart can never be brought about by law; it can only be effected through conversion of one's thoughts. When that is accomplished then there is no longer any need of compulsive laws.

I had asked you to help in the relief of Muslim brothers and sisters who have suffered during the last riot. Yesterday you did not come prepared for the purpose. I expect of you today to contribute to your fullest extent in this noble cause."

*(Mahatma Gandhi's post-Prayer address on the 26th March, 1947, read out as he had observed silence that day).*

(6) "As the audience took some time to settle down during this evening's prayer Gandhiji remarked at the beginning of his address that it would be difficult for him to tell all that he wanted to do if they continued in the same

manner. He expected that they had come to the prayer ground with an earnest desire to pray and then do the work of God, not for mere sight-seeing.

Several correspondents had complained to him that he was utilizing his prayer meetings for the propagation of his favourite political ideas. But the speaker never suffered from any feeling of guilt on that account. Human life being an undivided whole, no line could ever be drawn between its different compartments, nor between ethics and politics. A trader who earned his wealth by deception only succeeded in deceiving himself when he thought that his sins could be washed away by spending some amount of his ill-gotten gains on the so-called religious purposes. One's everyday life was never capable of being separated from his spiritual being. Both acted and reacted upon one another.

Indeed, it might even be said that the Law which held together the universe was indistinguishable from the Law-Maker. Speaking in human language, one might even go so far as to say that God Himself was subject to the Wheel of the Law. We were used to the saying that the 'king could do no wrong.' But in God's universe even such a distinction was hardly permissible. One could only say that 'there could be no wrong in the Law, for the Law and the Law-Maker were one and the same.' There was no scope for even the least little blade of grass to be free from the operation of God's laws."

Mahatma Gandhi then referred "to a certain letter he had received from a very frank and honest friend. The letter had reminded him that the efforts for religious toleration that he had been making were all in vain for, after all, the quarrel between the Hindus and the Muslims was not on account of religious differences but was essentially political in origin; religion had only been made to serve as a label for political distinctions. The friend had expressed the opinion that it was a tangle between United India on the one hand and India Divided on the other." Mahatma Gandhi confessed that "he did not yet know what the full meaning of dividing India really was. But what he wanted to impress upon the audience was that supposing it

were only a so-called political struggle, did it mean that all rules of decency and morals should be thrown to the winds? When human conflicts were divorced from ethical considerations, the road could only lead to the use of the atom bomb where every trace of humanity is held completely in abeyance. If there were honest differences among the people of India, should it then mean that the forty crores should descend to the level of beasts, slaughter men, women and children, innocent and guilty alike, without the least compunction? Could they not agree to settle their differences decently and in a comradely spirit? If they failed, only slavery of an unbecomable type could await them at the end of the road."

At this stage the audience near the dias became rather noisy and Mahatma Gandhi had to cut short his speech. He made an appeal to the audience to unite their purse strings generously and contribute all that they possibly could towards the fund. As regards the question whether the Muslims had contributed similarly for relief in Noakhali, Mahatma Gandhi said that "it was indeed true that little had come to him from that quarter. But the reason had been that he was now looked upon as enemy No. 1 rather than a friend by the majority of the Muslim community in India. Yet even in Comilla, there had been a case where some Muslim and Christian friends had contributed more than Rs. 800 along with a parcel of conch-shell bangles and vermilion for distribution among the Hindu women from whom such ceremonial signs had been forcibly removed during the disturbances."

*(Mahatma Gandhi's post-Prayer speech on the 10th March, 1947, at the Bankipur Maidan).*

(7) In the beginning of his address Mahatma Gandhi said that "that was perhaps his last evening prayer for the time being in the city of Patna, because his tour in the rural areas was going to begin on the following day. For the next few days he would tour with the city as the centre and return to it every night for rest, the prayers being nationally held elsewhere." He expected, however, that "the spirit in

which the previous evening's contributions to the fund for the Muslim sufferers had been made would continue unabated. The collections had amounted to nearly Rs. 2,000, besides there were some ornaments which yet remained to be auctioned. He was glad that women had given their ornaments, and he reminded them in this connection that the true ornament of woman was a pure heart, the place of which could never be taken by any physical adornment."

Then Mahatma Gandhi referred "to a letter from a correspondent which had lately reached him. It was in answer to that letter that he wanted to say that if a man abused him, it would never do for him to return the abuse. An evil returned by another evil only succeeded in multiplying it, instead of leading to its reduction. It was a universal law that violence could never be quenched by superior violence but could only be quenched by non-violence or non-resistance. But the true meaning of non-resistance had often been misunderstood or even distorted. It never implied that a non-violent man should bend before the violence of an aggressor. While not returning the latter's violence by violence, he should refuse to submit to the latter's illegitimate demand even to the point of death. That was the true meaning of non-resistance.

If, for instance someone asked him under threat of violence to admit a claim, say, like that of Pakistan, he should not immediately rush to return the violence thus offered. In all humility he would ask the aggressor what was really meant by the demand and if he was really satisfied that it was something worth striving for, then he would have no hesitation in proclaiming from the house-top that the demand was just and it had to be admitted by everyone concerned. But if the demand was backed by force, then the only course open to the non-violent man was to offer non-resistance against it as long as he was not convinced of its justice. He was not to return violence by violence but neutralize it by withholding one's hand and, at the same time, refusing to submit to the demand. This was the only civilized way of going on in the world. Any other course could only lead to a race for armaments interspersed

by periods of peace which was by necessity and brought about by exhaustion, when preparation would be going on for violence of a superior order. Peace through superior violence inevitably led to the atom bomb and all that it stood for. It was the completest negation of non-violence and of democracy which was not possible without the former.

The non-violent resistance described above required courage of a superior order to that needed in violent warfare. Forgiveness was the quality of the brave, not of the cowardly Mahatma Gandhi here related a story from the *Mahabharata*, "when one of the Pandava brothers was accidentally injured while living in disguise in the home of King Virata. The brothers not only hid what had happened, but for fear that harm might come to the host if a drop of blood touched the ground, they prevented it from doing so by means of a golden bowl." "It was this type of forbearance and courage" which Mahatma Gandhi "wished every Indian to develop whether he was a Hindu, Mussalman, Christian, Parsi or Sikh. That alone could rescue them from their present fallen condition."

"The lesson of non-violence was present in every religion" but Mahatma Gandhi fondly believed that "perhaps it was here in India that its practice had been reduced to a science. Innumerable saints had laid down their lives in *tapacharya* until poets had felt that the Himalayas became purified in their snowy whiteness by means of their sacrifice. But all that practice of non-violence was nearly dead today. It was necessary to revive the eternal law of answering anger by love and violence by non-violence; and where could this be more readily done than in this land of King Janaka and Ramachandra?"

(*Mahatma Gandhi's post-Prayer speech on the Bankepur Maidan on the 11th March, 1947*).

(7a) Mahatma Gandhi held his prayer by the side of the *Mangla Talao* (tank) in Patna city this evening. On his way, he had visited the village of Kumrahar which had been very badly affected by *rust*.

Mahatma Gandhi referred in the beginning of his Address "to the decision of the British Government to quit India. The latter were a nation with a strong sense of reality; and when they realized that it did not pay to rule, they did not hesitate to withdraw their power over a country. This had been the course of British history in the past. If the British were going, as they surely were, what should be the duty of Indians at the same time? Were we to return blow for blow among ourselves, and thus perpetuate our slavery, only to tear up our Motherland, in the end, into bits which went by the name of *Hindustan* and *Pakistan*, *Brahministan* and *Achhutistan*? What greater madness could there be than what had taken place in Bengal and Bihar, or what was taking place in the Punjab or the Frontier Province?

Should we forget our humanity and return a blow for a blow? If some misdirected individual took it into his head to desecrate a temple or break idols, should a Hindu in return desecrate a mosque on that account? Did it in any way help to protect the temple or to save the cause of Hinduism? Personally he was as much an idol-worshipper as an idol-breaker, and he suggested that the whole of the audience, whether Hindu, Muslim or any other, were also, whether they admitted it or not. He knew that mankind thirsted for symbolism. Were not *mosques* or churches in reality the same as *mandirs*? God resided everywhere, no less in stock or stone than in a single hair on the body of man. But men associated sacredness with particular places and things more than with others. Such sentiment was worthy of respect when it did not mean restrictions on similar freedom for others." "To every Hindu and Mussalman," Mahatma Gandhi's advice was that "if there was compulsion anywhere, they should gently but firmly refuse to submit to it. Personally, he himself would hug an idol and lay down his life to protect it rather than brook any restriction upon his freedom of worship."

"That required courage of a higher order than was needed in violent resistance," Mahatma Gandhi then narrated "the story of Badshah Khan's conversion to non-violence. The latter came from a tribe whose tradition was to return a

blow for a blow, there being cases where blood feud had been handed down from sire to son. Badshah Khan himself felt that such endless reprisals only served to perpetuate the slavery of the Pathans. When he took to non-violence, he realized a kind of transformation coming over the Pathan tribes. It did not mean that every Pathan had undergone the transformation or that Badshah Khan, who was endearingly called a *fakir* because he had won the heart of everybody by love and service, had himself reached the highest goal of non-violence. As far as he (the speaker) knew he (Badshah Khan) was every day nearing the goal because he realized the truth of it." "It was this type of brave non-violence" which Mahatma Gandhi "wished the audience to imitate."

Mahatma Gandhi continued that "he had come to Bihar in order to help the people in realizing the extent of the madness to which they had stooped. His object was to induce them to repent and thus undo the wrongs which had been perpetrated. The ruined houses of the Muslim family, he had just visited, had almost brought tears to his eyes. But he had steeled his heart and had come to teach the Hindu his duty towards his Muslim brother. True repentance required true courage. And Bihar, which had risen to great heights during the *satyagraha* in Champaran and which was the land over which the *Buddha* had roamed and taught, was surely capable once more of rising to heights from which it could radiate its effulgence over the rest of India. Only unadulterated non-violence could raise it to that status."

Mahatma Gandhi added that, in his opinion, "the departure from the straight path of non-violence they had made at times in 1942 was very probably responsible for the aberration to which he had referred. He instanced also the spirit of general lawlessness which had seized them in as much as they dared to travel without tickets, pull chains unlawfully or in senseless vindictiveness burnt *Zamindari* crops or belongings. He was no lover of the *Zamindari* system. He had often spoken against the system; but he frankly confessed that he was not the enemy of the *Zamindars*. He owned no enemies. The best way to bring about reform in

the economic and social systems, whose evils were admittedly many, was through the royal road of self-suffering. Any departure from it only resulted in merely changing the form of the evil that was sought to be liquidated violently. Violence was incapable of destroying the evil root and branch."

Lastly, Mahatma Gandhi "referred to a letter he had received from the *Harijans* asking him to visit their quarters and to live with them. He would have loved to do both the things; but he had to restrict himself to the mission that had brought him to Bihar. But having made himself a *Managi* in thought and deed, he could never forget the *Harijans*. He was sorry to say that the latter were still suffering from any disabilities at all and that they did not get ready redress of their grievances."

(*Mahatma Gandhi's post-Prayer speech on the 12th March, 1947, near Mangla Tank, Patna City*).

(8) After visiting the ruined Muslim homes of the village of Pasa, Mahatma Gandhi went to the prayer ground at Ebbadulah Chawk. He began his address by a reference to "the sight which had just greeted his eyes and he expressed surprise at the madness which had temporarily swept over the otherwise peaceful inhabitants of Bihar. To anyone who felt that Bihar was avenging Noakhali by what it did, he would firmly say that this was not the way of vengeance. The mentality which made one section of Indians look upon another as enemies was suicidal; it could only serve to perpetuate their slavery. In the end, such a mentality might even lead a person into the parochial feeling, when he would prize the freedom of his own village above everything else, if that were at all possible. What he really wanted every Indian to develop was the sense that an evil deed committed anywhere in India was the concern of every other Indian. Each should hold himself personally responsible for it and share the burden of undoing the wrong. Any other course could only lead them to happenings which the Punjab was witnessing today."

Invitations had reached Mahatma Gandhi to leave Bihar "in charge of the people's representatives and proceed to the



Punjab for the restoration of peace." But "he did not consider himself so vain as to think that he could serve everywhere. He considered himself to be an humble instrument in the hands of God. His hope was to do or die in the quest for peace and amity between the sister communities in Bihar and Bengal. And he could only go away when both the communities had become friendly with one another and no longer needed his services. In spite of the fact that he could not see his way of going to the Punjab, he hoped that his voice would reach the Hindus, the Mussalmans and the Sikhs of that province, who should try to put an end to the senseless savagery which had gripped them in its hold."

Mahatma Gandhi then "appealed to the local villagers to restore all the property looted from Muslim homes. They should also clean up the debris that had been created by their mischief and make it possible for their Muslim neighbours to return home quickly and safely." Incidentally he drew "the attention of the audience to the fact that the village he had visited was as filthy as could be imagined. He wanted all villagers to volunteer their services, set the paths right, fill up the ditches and replace them by gardens for the recreation of the inhabitants and, in short, convert the dung heaps into abodes of peace and happiness. They could at least begin with those villages which had been laid waste by their insane anger against their Muslim brothers."

(*Mahatma Gandhi's post-Prayer speech on the 13th March, 1947*).

(9) Before reaching the Prayer ground at Khairpur, Mahatma Gandhi visited several ruined homes and, when he began his Address after the Prayer, he appealed to the audience "to lend him not only their ears but also their hearts as well."

"His aim was the restoration of the old feelings which formerly prevailed among the Biharis Hindus and Mussalmans. Then it could be said of them that they did not merely live like brothers, but were veritably as brothers and sisters

to one another. Now and then there might have been differences and even quarrels, but it never went to the point when heart was rent from heart, as it seemed to be now. Painful things had happened which it was even difficult for him to relate; but then he wanted them to keep such happenings in the background and think of what their duty was in the present context."

"There were only two ways lying before the country: the course that the Punjab seemed to have taken of returning a blow for a blow, and the other of unadulterated non-violence." Referring to the method of violence, Mahatma Gandhi said that "some sort of peace might perhaps be established in the Province by means of force. He would hope, but it could never be said with confidence that the evil would not spread throughout India, as it happened in the case of 1857. Similar things, as we know, had happened during the Sepoy War when it was quelled by means of superior arms. Outwardly, things quieted down but the hatred against an imposed rule went deep underground, with the result that we were even today reaping the harvest of what was then sown. The British Government took the place of the East India Company. They established schools and law courts and Indians took to these with enthusiasm; they even co-operated in the diffusion of Western culture; but, in spite of all this, they could never bear the insult or the degradation involved in political subjugation. Similarly, but in a worse manner, if the Punjab quietened down by reason of superior force used against the people of the Punjab, the seed of further quarrel and bitterness between brothers and sisters that the Hindus and the Muslims were, would go still deeper.

Violence thus could never be ended by counter-violence. The only effective alternative to it was the way of non-violence. Bihar has had a lesson of it in Champaran in 1917, but he could perhaps say at this distance of time that although the farmers who were responsible for the movement were

soon disciplined to stay their hands while non-co-operating with the English planters, yet their non-violence was the non-violence of the weak. Now that Indians were fighting violently as between brother and brother such non-violence could be of no avail; only non-violence of the strong could prove really effective.

That required, as the first step, that there should be true repentance, based not on bravado but on the genuine feeling that right had to be done by those who had suffered from our momentary madness." Mahatma Gandhi "wished everyone not to be swayed by his personal influence or by reason of his past services but think calmly and with sufficient detachment; and, if they felt that the way of non-violence appealed to their head and heart, then they should come forward for the reparation of the injury done to the Muslim brother."

"The Secretary of the Provincial Muslim League who had been good enough to come to him had complained that although the Government had made arrangement for repatriations, the mental attitude of the Hindus was not sufficiently reassuring. The reality had to be faced and a determined effort made by everyone of them to root out the least trace of the feeling of hostility and make it possible for their Muslim neighbours to live in brotherly love once more.

If the Bihari Hindus did not honestly feel like it and imagined that the way of violence alone was the proper answer to the challenge of the times, then let them say so frankly and truthfully. He would not be hurt by the truth but would prefer not to live and see the day when the method of non-violence was thus beaten. It did not matter where he laid down his life for bringing about his cherished aim; anywhere in India would still be India for him. But he still hugged the hope that non-violence would surely be crowned by victory in the end; for in the example which

Bihar might set in this line today, lay future hope of peace and progress for our unhappy land."

(*Mahatma Gandhi's post-Prayer speech on the 14th March, 1947*).

(10) First referring to his visit to the Bihar Governor, Mahatma Gandhi said that "people might naturally be interested to learn why he had gone there. For him it was courtesy call because he could not go expecting any favours or services from the Governor as of yore. Under a responsible Government, which theirs was, services and favours he could expect only from the Ministers who were the representatives of the people. The Governor had undoubtedly powers with reference to the minorities but these too he could exercise only with great restraint. What he discussed was for him to communicate to the Ministers. One thing, however, the speaker was free to tell them. To his agreeable surprise the Governor had said that those who were responsible to the people had to begin with themselves. If they did not begin with their individual lives and showed relative perfection, they could not be real reformers or servants of the people."

Mahatma Gandhi wanted people also "to disabuse themselves of any thought that they had usurped any power from the British. Non-violent Non-Co-operation did not admit of any such assumption. What they performed was a simple duty. The result undoubtedly was that the British naturally and voluntarily divested themselves of much authority and powers and it was up to them to do their duty along the lines of non-violence, if they were to have complete power in and for the people. The late events in Bihar were a departure from that right conduct and, if the truth was not recognized and the infection of the Punjab spread, he had not a shadow of doubt that they would lose what was within their grasp. He, therefore, expected Bihar to recognize the fact and do its duty honourably and well."

Mahatma Gandhi then proceeded "to relate his experiences during the three short visits which had been paid to



*Mahatma Gandhi and Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan.*

6402



*Mahatma Gandhi after a prayer meeting at Massacubi (1947).*



6402



*Mahatma Gandhi and Khwaja Abdul Ghaffar Khan at a prayer meeting at Meerut (March, 1947).*







the neighbouring villages. It was painful for him to find homes in the same condition as when the rioters had left them. If they wanted their Muslim neighbours to come back, it was necessary that the proper condition should be restored and the debris completely cleared. Every individual who felt it was his duty to make the return of the refugees smooth, could at once lend a hand in rendering the broken homes habitable once more."

Mahatma Gandhi then referred "to the healthy competition which had been noticed among the rural people for contributing towards the relief fund. In quantity the collections might have fallen short of what went to the credit of the inhabitants of Bankipur but quantity was there made up by quality, for most of the rural contributions were made up of very small sums of money."

Mahatma Gandhi then told the audience "what promises he had made on their behalf to the Muslim sufferers who had come to him in the course of the day. He had assured them, in their name, that a repetition of the recent tragedy was impossible in Bihar. He had assured a flourishing Muslim merchant that he should not be afraid of restarting his business in full confidence, for he was sure that the Bihari Hindu would honour that pledge."

(*Mahatma Gandhi's post-Prayer speech on the 16th March, 1947*).

(11) The gathering at Masaurhi was, according to official estimates, more than thirty thousand and, during the *Rasmdhas* a very large section of the men and women present participated in the recital. Mahatma Gandhi began by "congratulating the audience on that account." Then he told them that "his Bihar tour had not been undertaken for pleasure, but on account of serious and grave reasons. He would visit those places where Muslims had suffered. His appeal to the Hindus was to show repentance by means of worthy and suitable acts."

"During the mad days of November, women and children were senselessly murdered, while men had also been done to death in such numbers as to put Noakhali in the shade, although events there had been of a sufficiently serious character. He expected the Hindus of Bihar to show true repentance and not merely shout "Jai" or victory in his name. He not only expected them to contribute liberally towards the relief fund but what he expected them to do more was that they should come forward and confess at least to him the wrongs that they had done. This alone could bring him true peace of mind."

Mahatma Gandhi said that "he had asked for reports of events from various sources. One of them stated that the initial aggression had been from the side of the Mussalmans. He was not at all concerned how the trouble actually started: the problem was, as the Hindus were in such overwhelming majority, how could they stoop so low as to indulge in murdering the innocents? True repentance, with the consequent reparatory action, alone could restore abiding peace between the two sister communities.

The report also accused the Government of indifference to wrongs suffered by the Hindus at the hands of the Muslims. Similar reports had also been received from Muslim quarters complaining of indifference to Muslim complaints." Mahatma Gandhi continued that "he was slow to believe either report. A popular Government that was so indifferent or partial one way or the other could not exist for any length of time. The Government had already declared that they would presently appoint an impartial Commission to hear all complaints, examine the causes of the terrible disturbances and discover ways and means for avoiding repetition of the tragedy. They would also advise as to the reparation to be made to the sufferers. Let those who had sent their letters to him be ready with their evidence to be put before the Commission. His was not the way of a judge or of a prosecutor. His was the humble role of a reformer and humanitarian. He had, therefore, to deal with known facts and invite offenders to repent for their follies."

*(Mahatma Gandhi's post-Prayer speech at Masanahi on the 17th March, 1947).*

(12) Mahatma Gandhi referred to his visit to Masaurhi and described with "emotion the wreckage he had witnessed." He pointed out that "he had read about the happenings in Masaurhi in the Muslim League report which, he regretted to have to say, he had believed to be grossly exaggerated. But he had to confess now that much of the description about Masaurhi seemed to him to be borne out. And what one read, however honest it might be, was wholly different in effect from the actual sight. He was told that the tragedy was largely due to the excitement caused by the observance of *Nashab Day*. He was told, too, that Muslims of Bihar were perturbed by the talk that was going about that the *Pujab Day* was to be observed on the 23rd. He hoped that it was a mere rumour which had no foundation in fact. Such an observance anywhere would mean a clear invitation for mutual slaughter between brother and brother. He had told the Muslim friends that if such a misfortune took place in Bihar he would want to perish in the flames. His incessant prayer to God was that he would not keep him alive to witness such an awful and disgraceful scene."

Mahatma Gandhi then read two letters which he had received on the way to Bihar from the adjacent villages. One was from Sam and the other from Baria. He "wished that the friendly spirit running through the letters which were described to be as from the Hindu and Muslim residents of the villages would become universal."

*(Mahatma Gandhi's post-Prayer speech at Bir in the evening of the 18th March, 1947).*

(13) Mahatma Gandhi began his post-Prayer speech "by reminding the audience of his two days absence in Bir in which he had seen the terrible horrors they had wrought. He could not describe them for his heart was so full that he might run the risk of bursting into tears. He had come to teach them to be truly brave. As the song that had been sung at the Prayers had told they should be unaffected by joy or sorrow or by praise or blame. These pairs of opposites were after all from God Almighty.

What made him really sad was that even so many days after the tragedy they had done nothing by way of repentance. If they did not shoulder the responsibility for the restoration or renovation of damaged property by way of repentance would they also equally say that the heinous crimes committed against their Muslim brethren were also an act of the Government, with which they had nothing to do? The Government was no longer a Government dictated from England. It was their own Government composed of representatives elected by them. Therefore they were the masters and the members of the Government were their servants in every sense of the term. He admitted that the members of the Government were not elected under adult suffrage of men and women. Nevertheless, it was a Government representative of a very large number of enfranchised inhabitants of this land.

He had visited Harlah today. A very large number of men women and children had been butchered there and the majority of Muslim homes had been looted and burnt. And he was told by the Muslims there that even now the damaged property was not safe from depredation.

It was also a matter for consideration whether the Muslim sufferers could return to the houses in which so many of their dear ones had been brutally murdered. He, therefore, suggested to the audience that if they were really penitent they must not be satisfied with giving the donation which he was glad to say they gave willingly and cheerfully. That kind of repentance alone was not good enough. He, therefore, suggested that the Hindus surrounding the damaged villages should make it a point of honour to bend together and take up the shovel and pickaxe and clear all property and debris and clear the lanes and streets of the village with as much rapidity as possible and take such part as they could in rebuilding damaged villages. If they did that one act sincerely and promptly he was quite sure the refugees would gladly return being sure that their Hindu neighbours had done as much reparation as they were capable of doing and there was no longer any cause of fear from them. He could see that if there was a large scale repentance of the

true type Bihar would be a land to envy and set a noble example to the rest of India, if not to the world."

When Mahatma Gandhi informed the audience "of a wire he had received from *Kash Prakashan*, Soodpur, saying that things were not as good as they looked then and acon etc. were growing and that there was rumour of observance of *Pakistan Day* on the 23rd. He would say to Shaheed (Subhawardy) that if he expected him to continue his work in Bihar without being anxious about his work in Nankahal he expected him to give an unequivocal assurance to the Hindu sufferers and follow up his promises with prompt action. This did not mean that he himself should abandon the idea of *Pakistan*. But the observance of such days in the present atmosphere of the country was a sin against men and God."

(*Mahatma Gandhi's post-Prayer speech at Masawhi on the 20th March, 1947*).

(14) Mahatma Gandhi commenced with a reference to his visit to Garahuan village "where men, women and children had been brutally done to death and asked those assembled before him to sit in mournful silence in sympathy with the deceased." He asked them "to consider for themselves why innocent women and children had been killed. Was it to save any religion? No religion taught anyone to kill his neighbours. What was done was nothing but wanton destruction, whether from motives of self interest or any other, he did not stop to think.

The houses, which a few months ago were full of life, were now desolate and everyone knew about it. But then what was to be done next? People went to bathe in the Ganges, believing that their sins could thus be washed off. The ruins before them should remind them of the sin they had committed on helpless women and children and they should seek to expiate it by considering in what way they could redeem themselves. They should clean the ruined houses and make them neat and habitable. They should also express to their Muslim brethren their repentance for the past occurrences and persuade them to return to their villages, telling them that then alone they would have peace of mind. It was possible that the Muslims might turn round

and ask how they could go back and live in the houses where their kith and kin had been done to death. The Muslims would be justified in saying so. But, if the guilty men or their relations could go to the Muslims with truly penitent hearts and assure them that what was past was past and would never be repeated, he was sure that even a stone heart would melt.

Amidst this mad upheaval there were men, like oasis in a desert, who risked the wrath of the violent mobs and saved many Muslim lives and Muslim property. Those people deserves congratulations, though they did not need any. If he did not go to them, it did not mean that he had not recognized their work. But he was in the nature of a doctor who went not to the well but to the suffering.

He had been told that the Hindus had also suffered in the conflict. If there were any such, they too needed help and would be included in the relief.

About fifty persons, who were wanted in connection with the riot cases, had surrendered the day after his arrival at Masaurhi. He welcomed it and hoped that others who had taken part in the riots would surrender to the proper authorities, making a clean breast of the crimes they had committed and taking whatever punishment might be given to them. If people had not the courage to surrender to the authorities they could come to him or Badshah Khan or Major General Shah Nawaz with their confessions."

Lastly, Mahatma Gandhi referred to "the fear entertained by the Hindus of Noakhali about preparations that were made by the Muslims to observe *Pakistan Day* on the 23rd inst. A friend from *Khadī Prasthān* had also come to him and explained to him that the situation in Noakhali was deteriorating." Mahatma Gandhi said that "he had told that friend that he would not be persuaded to leave his post in Bihar at the present moment, for he believed that his mission if fully successful in Bihar, would cast its effect on Bengal and perhaps on the rest of India. The Muslims of Bihar and the Hindus of Bengal should accept him as security for the safety of their life and property from the

hands of the communalists. He had come here to do or die. Therefore, there was no question of abandoning his post of duty till the Hindus and the Muslims could assure him that they did not need his services."

(*Mahatma Gandhi's post-Prayer speech on the 21st March, 1947*).

(15) Mahatma Gandhi, who returned to Patna this morning (22nd March) after a six days' tour of the affected areas in the jurisdiction of the Masaurhi Thana, "gave an account of his impressions to the gathering assembled at the evening prayer meeting at the *Banhipur Maidan*." He expressed "satisfaction with the attitude of the villagers who were not only genuinely penitent over the past happenings but were also willing to atone for the past in the manner he might suggest. Liberal contributions, as liberal as it could be in rural India, were made by them for the relief of the Muslims, and even when he drove in the car he was stopped and presented with purses. Besides purses, he had also received letters from them expressing their readiness and willingness to help in the rehabilitation of the Muslims.

In a number of places due to the heaverly of the local Hindus, no incidents had occurred. He was told by the Muslims themselves that in Dinapore Subdivision no trouble occurred though the Muslims were greatly nervous."

Mahatma Gandhi said that "he had addressed the Muslim women refugees in the morning at Pipawan. He did not wish at present to enter into a description of the feelings of these women and their present condition. His heart was too full and he did not wish to shed tears. He only wanted to tell them how to repent. He tried as best as he could to console them and persuaded them to pick up courage and return to their villages, placing reliance on God."

At this meeting Mahatma Gandhi was told that Muslim women and men dreaded the approach of March 23rd, as it had been reported that *Paryus Day* would be observed in Bihar on that date. He had told them that "the Bihar Government had banned the observance of any kind of day, be it

*Palmas Day* or *Pongab Day*<sup>1</sup>. The Minister who was present also gave the assurance that no celebration of any kind would be permitted and that the ban would be strictly enforced throughout the Province. The Bihar Government had banned the *Kuka Rally* also. In his opinion, that was rightly done. The present atmosphere in the country was such that any kind of rally or procession led to one kind of trouble or other. In the language of the *Blagovest Gals*, very often action lay in inaction and inaction in action." Gandhiji "illustrated this truth by giving striking modern instances. Thus in modern warfare, very often inactivity was obligatory and could therefore be described as real activity, and at such time any activity so-called would savour of criminality. He would, therefore, urge both the Hindus and the Muslims to refrain from celebrating these days. A true satyagrahi should implicitly obey the directions of those he had himself helped to put in power. What he said did not refer only to March 23rd. It applied to the future also and at no time should these celebrations be indulged in, so long as the atmosphere remain as it was that day."

Continuing Mahatma Gandhi said that "if the Hindus realised the error of their past conduct then he would expect the Hindus in the affected areas to contribute physical labour for the renovation of damaged houses. That act performed voluntarily, freely and sincerely would inspire lost confidence as nothing else could."

#### 1. A Bihar Government Press Communiqué (19th March) —

"As the orders now stand, no meeting or procession can be held without specific orders from the District Magistrate concerned. Government have received report that there are proposals to celebrate, in the course of the next few days in this month or shortly thereafter, a *Palmas Day*, an *Anti-Palmas Day* and a *Pongab Day*, connected with the recent Pongab disturbances. Government are further informed that it is proposed to hold *Kuka* rallies during this period or shortly thereafter. In the tense situation prevailing in the country generally and in Bihar in particular since the commencement of October-November last year, and in the wake of the Pongab disturbances, Government do not consider that observances of such *Days* or *rallies* in the Province of Bihar is immune from risk at present. They have accordingly issued orders to District Magistrates not to allow meetings or processions in connection with these celebrations."



Gandhiji mentioned that "after his arrival at Meerut about fifty persons who were wanted in connection with the riots had surrendered to the authorities. By this time the number had probably gone up and he hoped many more would come forward to acknowledge their guilt. Confession of their guilt not only evoked respect for their courage but would ultimately enhance the prestige of the Province as a whole."

(*Mahatma Gandhi's post-Prayer speech on the 22nd March, 1947, on the Bankipur Maidan*).

(16) Mahatma Gandhi's weekly silence having commenced, his written message in *Hindustani* was read out to the congregation after the prayers. "It was his earnest prayer," he said in this message, "that those who were present and those others whom his voice could reach should understand the aim of life. The aim of life was that they should serve the Power that had created them, and on Whose mercy or consent depended their very breath, by heartily serving its creation. That meant love, not hate which one saw everywhere. They had forgotten that aim and were either actually fighting each other or preparing for that fight. If they could not escape that calamity, they should regard India's independence as an impossible dream. If they thought that they would get independence by the simple fact of the British power quitting the land, they were sadly mistaken. The British were leaving India. But if they continued fighting one another, some other power or powers would step in. If they thought they could fight the whole world with its weapons, it was a folly.

A friend had written that a sort of peace seemed to have been established in the Punjab through military occupation. That peace was the peace of the grave. The people were silently preparing for an open and deadlier fight. Weapons were being collected. After that even the military would find it impossible to control the people. It was his firm conviction that the peace established with the aid of the military or the police would be no peace. True peace would only come when at least one side, if not both, adopted the true bravery that non-violence gave.

Bihar had realised that there was no bravery in killing women and children. It was sheer cowardice. It would be a grand thing if Bihar could manifest the true bravery of silent strength and show thereby the true path of life to the whole world."

*(Mahatma Gandhi's post-Prayer speech on the 23rd March, 1947, on the Bankipur Maidan).*

(16a) "The prayer meeting at Rajghat was very noisy. There was a very large number of women not used to meetings. They set up an incessant chatter. The usual prayer was nevertheless conducted amid the din. When the time for Gandhiji's speech came, he said that he was not anxious to hear his own voice. He would not speak to them if the chatter continued. His remarks were, therefore, addressed to the volunteers who, he said, ought to prepare specially new audiences such as that day's by word of mouth or otherwise telling them the rules that govern public meetings. He advised preparation of short leaflets for distribution among such people.

He then said he had visited Bahrawan where Hindu houses had been damaged. He said that for him the Hindus and the Muslims were like two eyes, as Sir Syed Ahmed had said. Such isolated instances ought not to diminish the heinousness of the Hindus' crime against the Muslims."

*(Mahatma Gandhi's post-Prayer speech on the 24th March, 1947).*

(17) "At today's prayer meeting perfect silence was observed by the audience to the end. Gandhiji congratulated them for it. He told them that he had heard that the Hindus were boycotting the Muslims. If that was so, it was a bad omen. True repentance demanded true friendship in which there could be no room for boycott. Hence, if they were truly repentant, they ought not to boycott the Muslims. He then referred to a visit to Muslim League friends who were prepared to co-operate in every way in rehabilitation and

he added that without the co-operation of the League friends in Bihar there could be no friendship which depended not on the bayonet but on mutual goodwill."

Mahatma Gandhi had a visit from a friend from Noakhali, who had come to report that things had worsened there after his departure. He had replied that "the work he was doing in Bihar could not but affect the Noakhali work for the better. He advised the Noakhali friend to report every misdeed to the proper authorities. Whatever came to his notice he would gladly pass on to the authorities with confidence. In any case he advised them to be calm, courageous and to have faith in God as the true and only Helper."

Lastly, he referred to a visit from Dom friends, "whom it was the duty of every Hindu to befriend. They, he was told, were under a double disability. They were treated as outcasts by the caste Hindus and as the lowest in the hierarchy of untouchables. This was a shame which the Hindus were bound to wipe out at the earliest moment, if Hinduism was not to perish."

(*Mahatma Gandhi's post-Prayer speech on the 25th March, 1947*).

(18) "The *Muslim League* undoubtedly is a great organisation of Mussalmans. It did not mean that all Mussalmans were in it. But it has to be admitted that without the co-operation of the *League* work could not proceed. That position of the *League* made it all the more imperative that the members of the *League* should preach the true ideals of Islam, its teachings about peace and humanity. The Congress being the biggest organisation in India has been doing work for Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Christians, Parsis, etc. It could never interfere with the religious practices of any sect or community. As it is big, it has got bigger responsibilities in this respect. If these two organisations proceeded along the true paths how could there be any trouble in the country?"

(*Mahatma Gandhi's post-Prayer speech at Jahanabad on the 26th March, 1947*).

(19) Referring to the touching scenes in the villages where the Muslim women cried on seeing Mahatma Gandhi he observed:—

"The *Muslim League* does not ask the womenfolk to behave in such a manner. It is no good making men and women cowards. Every effort should be made to make men and women brave in such circumstances. Allowing themselves to be overpowered by emotions they forget the Creator and the Saviour. I give the same instruction to the Hindus as well."

Referring to the retaliatory spirit of the Hindus, Mahatma Gandhi said "what is the harm if the Punjab Muslims have gone mad? How the Hindus of Bihar are affected if the Muslims of the Punjab make forcible conversion there? Should you also go mad in the same manner? If you do, you will destroy the Hindu religion itself. Similarly, if the Punjab Muslims go on doing it, they are determined to destroy the Islam itself. I warn you and appeal to you, never to think of repeating the mistake you have done. You can do it only after killing me and for that I am at your hands."

(*Mahatma Gandhi's post-Prayer speech at Jahanabad, 26th March, 1947*).

(20) Referring to the rumour that the Hindus would treat the Muslims harshly after the departure of Mahatma Gandhi from Bihar he observed:—"For my part I can only say that I will never give up what I consider just even if God himself comes and tells me to do otherwise. I want to tell all the Hindus that they must not even think of treating the Muslims in a bad manner after my departure. You live in the land of *Ramayan*, and it is against your religious teaching to think of treating the small minority in that manner in Bihar. If you want to suppress the minority in that manner with what face would you have your independence? You cannot have the independence of your country when you want to deprive others of their independence."

Concluding his post-Prayer speech on the 26th March, 1947, Mahatma Gandhi said:—The Hindus have done wrong in Bihar and they all should go to the Muslims to express their deepest regret for what has been done. Why at all the Muslims should live in relief camps—it is a matter of shame for the Hindus. The Hindus should go to these Muslims and invite them again in their villages after reconstructing their damaged houses and giving them all assurances that never such acts will be repeated. If you can do that my beloved Bihar will rise again to its previous glory. But if you fail, Bihar will go to wilderness."

*(Mahatma Gandhi's post-Prayer speech, 26th March, 1947).*

(21) "If you all act upto my advice, I am sure you will incur no further loss. During sixty years of my public life I have never advised any body in such a way as to put him to loss. You say you are afraid because you are in a minority in Bihar. But when I launched my *Satyagraha* in South Africa, Indians there were only 13,000 strong in that sub-continent. They were in a hopeless minority there. There were many Muslims in South Africa at that time and all, both Hindus and Muslims, joined that struggle. This handful of Indians launched a struggle there and won their case by which they are still able to live in that country. If I do not tell you what I feel about your memorandum submitted to me I myself will become a coward. I would ask you never to preach cowardice in such a manner. My advice to you is that even if there be a small child left in a village, he should live in that village with a brave heart and never leave it at any cost. If Hindus misbehaved in any manner with such Muslims they will only destroy Hindu religion itself."

*(Mahatma Gandhi's reply to a Muslim gentleman who submitted before him a memorandum of Muslim refugees at Arrah on the 27th March, 1947).*

(22) In his post-Prayer speech at Okri (Akri) village this evening (March 27th) Mahatma Gandhi "uttered the warning that Indians might lose the golden apple of independ-

ence which was almost within their grasp, out of insanity which had caused scenes of desolation and destruction and stated that the peace that reigned in the land was only on the surface." He said this "while referring to his visit during the morning and afternoon to some rice-affected villages."

Mahatma Gandhi added that "they knew the very first pronouncement that the Viceroy had made when he assumed office stated that he was sent as the last Viceroy to wind up British rule in India. They must have noticed that the pronouncement was deliberate, unconditional and unequivocal. He knew that it had become a fashion, though not without cause, to distrust every British declaration. He for one would advise the acceptance of every declaration at its face value without qualifying it in the light of past experience to the contrary. His experience was that it was the deceiver who always lost and never the dupe if he was honest and brave. But he very much feared on account of what had happened in the country that by their folly or, what was worse than that, insanity, they might let slip out of their hands their hard-won prize before it was strongly locked in their unbreakable fist." Mahatma Gandhi referred to Bihar and the Punjab and said that "he had wisdom enough to see that they themselves might tempt the Viceroy to eat his own words, uttered solemnly on a solemn occasion. Heaven forbid that such an occasion should arise, but, if it did, even though his might be a voice in the wilderness, he would declare that the Viceroy should firmly and truly carry out his declaration and complete the British withdrawal."

Mahatma Gandhi referred to the police strike, and said that "the police, like the scavengers, should never go on strike. Theirs was an essential service and they should render that service irrespective of pay.

"There were many other effective and honourable means of getting grievances redressed. If he was a Cabinet Minister, he would offer the strikers nothing whatever under the threat of a strike, which implied force. He would give them the choice of an impartial arbitration, without any condition."

"It will be a bad day for India if the military, including the police, rule India," Mahatma Gandhi said. He hoped

"the police would call off their strike unconditionally, and request the Ministry to appoint an impartial arbitrator to investigate their case."

Mahatma Gandhi also appealed to the policemen "not to behave in the manner in which they were behaving then." "Every policeman," he said, "was a servant of the people and his duty was to behave like the *Kānda Kāndaogars*. Policemen were the custodians of law."

Continuing, Mahatma Gandhi said that "if every man, woman and child tried to understand his or her duty and if there was no theft or dacoity, then there would be no need for policemen. Everyone could then be a policeman and help each other."

Mahatma Gandhi expressed regret that "the Bihar Government had employed British soldiers to deal with the strikers. No matter what the cause was, and wherever it was, the Indian Governments must never requisition the services of British soldiers to deal with civil disturbances. Otherwise it would mean that the Indian Government were helpless without British arms."

(*Mahatma Gandhi's post-Prayer speech on the 27th March, 1947*).

(23) At the prayer meeting Mahatma Gandhi began by saying that "he had passed a very full and heavy day. The day was begun with a long meeting with the members of the local Muslim League at the *Jangalaw* of Mr. Azharul Haq, local *League* leader. He was with them for over an hour answering all kinds of questions. Then he had a meeting at his residential quarters with Hindus and Muslims belonging to Jehanabad and the surrounding villages. He had then a meeting with the *Congressmen* which included members of the various *Congress Committees*. Later he met the members of the local *Hindu Mahasabha*. Finally he had a heart-to-heart talk with over 25 members of the police force on strike. Then at half past three again he visited the villages of Malathi, Gangasagan, Bola and Allahganj, in which Muslims had suffered badly."

Referring to his visit to the villages, Mahatma Gandhi said "that naturally he was full of topics on which he wanted

to speak and beseech their attention. He was sorry to tell them that Hindu repentance was not open and sincere enough to inspire confidence among the Muslims. He had said in the afternoon meeting that it was open to representative Hindus who were present at the meeting to disabuse the Muslims of their suspicion. He was sorry to say that not one Hindu got up to give the needed assurance. He had not the heart, therefore, to ask his Muslim hearers whether they (the Hindus) had cleansed their hearts. They were the injured party in Bihar and it was not open to anyone to expect a satisfactory answer from them unless the guilty Hindu party had led the way by repentance. There were yet ringleaders like Mathura Singh roaming about and successfully evading arrest. There was, therefore, little cause for wonder if the Muslims were afraid to return to their respective villages." Mahatmas Gandhi said that "he could not help feeling that the culprit could not long remain at large if the Hindu population did not give him shelter. He asked Mathura Singh's friends and sympathisers to advise him to discover himself and face the consequences of his action. He would also like to tell him that it was no act of bravery for him to evade arrest. He was thus rendering a disservice to himself, his religion and his country. He suggested to the Congressmen, in whose midst the inhumanities were enacted, that they could not free themselves, unless they made every effort to induce all the culprits to come out into the open to wash their guilt as publicly as they had committed the crimes."

Continuing Mahatma Gandhi said that "he had visited a mosque in the village Bala which was damaged during the disturbances. He was told that on the *Holi* day the mosque was again desecrated by some villagers who played *Holi* inside the mosque premises on the *Holi* day. If it was true, it was undoubtedly a notice given by them to the Muslims not to enter their homes even when they were rebuilt nor dare to visit the mosque. If this reported desecration on the *Holi* day was a fact, it was a bad omen for the Hindus, for Bihar and for the whole country."



Mahatma Gandhi further said that "he had heard at the *Muslim League* meeting in the morning and at the meeting of the Hindus and the Muslims in the afternoon that Mahant Bhagwat Das who was a member of the Bihar Legislative Assembly was himself a participator in the crime and was himself present at both the meetings. The speaker advised him whilst he was under suspicion to give up his membership. He was glad to say, that Mahant Bhagwat Das, without a moment's hesitation, welcomed the advice and promised at once to act up to it. He also added that he was in no way a participator directly or indirectly in the crime and that he was quite ready to face an open impartial enquiry to be made by the *Muslim League* itself. If it was a sincere declaration, it was certainly a refreshing thing at a time when there was no real sign of sincere sorrow and repentance on the part of the Hindus in the affected areas. This he was obliged to say in spite of welcome letters of repentance to which he had made reference at the previous evening's meeting."

(*Mahatma Gandhi's post-Prayer speech on 28th March, 1947, at Allahgarh*).

(24) "As far as possible I have refrained from discussing the affairs in Noakhali in my speeches. But whenever I have had occasion to speak about Noakhali, I admit that I have spoken with great restraint. Do the Muslims want that I should not speak about the sins committed by them in Noakhali and that I should only speak about the sins of the Hindus in Bihar? If I do that, I will be a coward. To me the sins of the Noakhali Muslims and the Bihar Hindus are of the same magnitude and equally condemnable," observed Mahatma Gandhi while replying to a series of grievances set forth in written memoranda, which were submitted to him in the morning on the 28th March by the local Muslim refugees at a camp at Jehanabad.

One memorandum suggested that "Gandhiji's reference to the Noakhali incidents in his speeches instead of suppressing the Hindu feeling here would aggravate it."

1 The *Searchlight*, 29th March, 1947.

Mahatma Gandhi said that "as the Muslims today generally considered him as their enemy, he was sometimes obliged to speak with restraint. In the Punjab worse things were happening and at first he did not believe the newspaper stories, but his subsequent enquiries made him believe that far more excesses than the newspapers reported were being committed in the Punjab. Because it was the doing of a particular community, should he not speak about it? His mission could not be successful by such suppression."

Mahatma Gandhi thereafter replying to another memorandum, which stated that the signatories had no confidence in the present Ministry, said: "I told the Hindus of Noakhali, who also expressed such no confidence in Mr. Saheed Suhrawardy, that they could not remove Saheed Sahab from the Ministry as he was returned by the separate electorate system. So long as Saheed Sahab enjoys the confidence of the community he represents no one can remove him. Similarly, how can you remove the Ministers when they have been sent by the Hindu electorate? This unfortunate situation has been created by the communal electorate system which, you know, I have always condemned. Dr. Khan Sahab also said the same thing the other day that so long as he enjoyed the confidence of the Pathans there was no question of resignation. Moreover, what will happen if the Ministry goes out? There will again be the rule of the bureaucratic government. That apart, I can take good work from these Ministers as my relationship with them is most friendly."

Referring to the demand that fifty per cent of the officers and constables put in charge of new *thanas* should be Muslims, Mahatma Gandhi replied: "I disapproved of the very same demand of the Noakhali Hindus. This demand cuts across my peace mission. If conceded, this will mean so many small *Pakistans* and a division of Bihar. After all, wherever you live, you have to live by creating mutual goodwill and friendly relations with your neighbours. Even the *Qaid-e-Azam* once said that in the *Pakistan* areas the majority must so behave as to win the confidence of the minority. In the same manner, I am urging upon the Hindus here to win your confi-

dence. Either *Pakistan* or *Hindustan*, whichever is established, it must be based on justice and fairplay."

Referring to another demand that the Muslims may be allowed to resettle in certain exclusive areas, Mahatma Gandhi said: "You cannot force the Government to keep you in certain exclusive areas. Could I tell that to Saheed Sahab for the Noakhali Hindus? I never gave my encouragement to the Noakhali Hindus for such a move. I told the Hindus of Noakhali that if they were afraid, they could go anywhere if they got compensation. And why should the Government not pay compensation when they got the properties? Similarly, I will tell you to go anywhere provided you get adequate compensation. But I must tell you that it is not my heart's desire. Leaving your homestead in such a manner is nothing but cowardice. If Government is not prepared to pay compensation, I should say it is unworthy of them and Government cannot refuse it. Moreover if the Ministers who have been returned by the Hindu votes say that the Hindus here have gone beyond control, it is better for them to consume themselves in the flames of the Hindu rage than continue in office. Government has to do justice and cannot afford injustice in any manner."

Mahatma Gandhi thereafter referred to the Muslim grievances as put forward in the memorandum regarding the reported appointment of Mr. Justice Reuben to conduct the Bihar Riots Enquiry. He said: "The memorandum suggested that the Muslims had no faith in Mr. Reuben. But they never suggested whom they wanted. We must have faith in some non-Muslim as Mr. Justice Reuben was. There is no harm in the One Man Commission. If the Muslims want, they can submit a panel of names from which the committee should be appointed. Then I can inform the authorities."

With regard to the demand of restoration and finding out of abducted women, Mahatma Gandhi said: "Since my arrival in Bihar I have been telling all those Muslims who told me about the abducted girls to give me the names and the family connection of such girls in order to help finding them out if they were still alive. But up-till now not one

name has been submitted to me. I again ask you to submit the names of the unfortunate girls."

In the meeting place within the refugees camp Mahant Bhagwat Das, M.L.A., against whom the Muslims brought forward the charge that he incited the Hindu mob during the riots was also present. Bhagwat Das then stood up and told Mahatma Gandhi that he was innocent and asked for Muslims to bring forward specific instances to prove the charge. Mahant Bhagwat Das said: "Gandhiji, I am prepared to face my enquiry and I suggest that the Muslims themselves form an Enquiry Committee and judge me and my conduct during the riots. I have full confidence in those persons who are accusing me and let them judge my conduct."

(25) In his post-Prayer speech at Patna in the evening on the 29th March, Mahatma Gandhi "seemingly" referred to the death of Prof. Abdul Bari:—

"Prof. Bari was a disciple and co-worker of Dr. Rajendra Prasad. Dr. Rajendra Prasad has built for himself a unique and undisputed position and influence in this Province by his service and sacrifice. Prof. Bari also has by his service in the cause of workers in Jamshedpur and other places endeared himself to the people and rose to occupy the position of President of the Provincial Congress Committee. A fearless fighter, Prof. Bari was with the Congress during the different phases of its struggle for freedom."

Mahatma Gandhi referred to his visit earlier in the day to Prof. Bari's house "to console the members of the bereaved family and wean them from weeping and hearten them for the work that specially descended upon the weak shoulders of his children. \* \* \* as he entered the house he was struck with its simplicity and the simple life Prof. Bari had led. The house was located in an ordinary lane and what he saw inside the house fully bore out what every one had said about Prof. Bari that he was a poor man and that though he had opportunities he had scrupulously maintained his integrity as far as public finances were concerned. At a time when the administration of the country was in Congress hands and crores of rupees had to be administered men of Prof. Bari's honesty would have been of invaluable help. He

had hoped on his return from the third trip he had just finished to be more and more associated with him and make an effective appeal to him to modify, if not altogether get rid of, his short temper which went ill with the very high office, in fact the highest in the Province of Bihar, specially when there was a nationalist Ministry at the head of affairs which naturally had to be influenced by the premier Provincial Congress organisation. He had full faith in Prof. Bari and knew that his word carried great weight with him. But God had willed otherwise and he had deprived Bihar of the great service of a very brave man with the heart of a *fakir*. But men like Bari never died. It was for those who remained to carry on the noble work he had left behind."

(26) At the prayer meeting, held on the 17th April, Mahatma Gandhi "drew attention to the fact that for the sake of the Muslim friends who wished to join the prayers and the day had grown longer—the prayer time was advanced by fifteen minutes. He also warned those who were inclined to laugh at the selections from the *Quran* and other scriptures against the practice. They ought to cultivate the same regard for other religions that they had for their own. Not to do so was to belittle one's own faith and expose it to attacks from without."

After the prayer he referred to "the visits he had from Muslim friends who complained to him that in and about Bihar Sharif and Monghyr things were not quite favourable to the return of the refugees. If the information was correct, he was very sorry. The heat was so oppressive that he had not the heart to undertake arduous travelling during the hot weather but he would have no other recourse if the Hindus in those places had not the spirit of repentance and did not resume their friendliness towards their Muslim neighbours, no matter how few they were. It was suggested to him that arms should be issued to the Muslims who were in fear of their Hindu neighbours. Those who made such suggestions did not know him. He would not issue any license to the Muslims or to the Hindus for the purpose of self-defence. It was a sign of barbarity. He would even take away the

arms from those who had them already. Their arms were a living faith in God and a stout heart born of that faith."

He had also a visit from the *zamindars* who, among other things, "had complained of growing lawlessness among the peasantry and labour. He deplored the fact. It was a blot on the fair name of Bihar. Such lawlessness was criminal and was bound to involve the very peasantry and labour in ruin, let alone the *zamindars* who were after all a mere handful. He fervently hoped that the lesson of the past thirty years in the virtue of non-violence would not be lost upon the people of Bihar. He was quite prepared to say for the sake of argument that the *zamindars* were guilty of many crimes of commission and omission. But that was no reason for the peasant and the labourer who were the salt of the earth to copy crime. If salt lost its savour wherewith could it be salted?"

(Mahatma Gandhi's post-Prayer speech on the 17 April, 1947).

(27) Mahatma Gandhi said in his post-Prayer speech that "he was told that he had done an injustice to the peasants and the labourers in his remarks of the previous evening. He was further told that it was the *zamindars* who continued the old coercive policy. Wherever the truth lay, his remarks were based on the assumption that what he was told was true. The *Kisars* had a rich experience of non-violent *satyagraha* when their amazing restraint brought about the end of a century-old wrong in the shape of the indigo grievance and planters' raj in Champaran. He hoped they would not forget the lesson of that rich experience."

To the landlords he said that "if what was said against them was true, he would warn them that their days were numbered. They could no longer continue as lords and masters. They had a bright future if they became the trustees of the poor *Kisars*. He had in mind not trustees in name but in reality. Such trustees would take nothing for themselves that their labour and care did not entitle them to. Then they would find that no law would be able to touch them. The *Kisars* would be their friends."

He next referred "to the complaint he had received about

a punitive tax that was levied. He felt that the State had no other alternative if the people would not give up the criminals. Nor could the State carry out mass arrests where hundreds and thousands were involved in shameful crimes. Punitive tax was then the only remedy. The only way by which the people could render the punitive tax unnecessary was to repent and undo the wrong done by voluntary labours and contributions. They should also approach the injured Muslims and request them to go back to their homes. They should assure them that they would regard them as their dear ones."

(*Mahatma Gandhi's post-Prayer speech on the 18th April, 1947*).

(28) "After the usual prayers Mahatma Gandhi in his remarks referred to two letters he had received: one from the Punjab from a lady known to him and the other a very well written letter from a Biharī who had chosen not to give his address and probably had given an assumed name. Both were friendly letters but written in anger. They had lost faith in *ahimsa* and practically advised retirement and save the speaker's good name which he had earned by his service. These friends did not know the virtue of *ahimsa*. His dream was not that some persons, the soldiers and the police, should save their honour, but every man and woman should be the custodian of his or her own honour. This was possible only under the rule of *ahimsa* and no other. He was never tired of repeating that the highest form of bravery was to be expressed through *ahimsa*. The people of Bihar had before them the example of the *ahimsa* of the indigo-growing peasants of Champaran who were able to bring to an end a century-old wrong."

Mahatma Gandhi then dealt with *khadd*. He said that "during the next four or five days he would be having meetings of the *All-India Spinning Association* and the *Hindustani Talimi Sangh*. He was not, therefore, going to see local people in connection with the Bihar disturbances. He would have to talk to them of *khadd* which above all was responsible for an India-wide activity in the villages of India. He made bold to say that without the constructive activity of which *khadd* or the *charkha* was the centre, the awakening of the villages would not have been possible. He reminded the

audience how under the late Jinnah's inspiration an *All-India Khadi Board* was established during his incarceration and how it was turned into the *All-India Spinners' Association* with an autonomous charter from the Congress and how it had distributed several crates of rupees among men and women of India's numerous villages. *Khadi* had easily become the symbol of non-violence. The truth of *Khadi* had been so firmly fixed in their minds that the spinning wheel had found a place on the much-prized tri-colour flag. *Khadi* had been happily described by Pandit Nehru as the livery of India's freedom. Though as an article of clothing it belonged as well to the harlot as to the chaste woman, for the nation its association was undoubtedly with the pure and the non-violent. If therefore *Khadi* had not found an abiding place in all the villages of India, as the President of the *Association* he had no hesitation in accepting the blame on behalf of himself and his fellow trustees. Their devotion to the cause was not as full as it should have been, their knowledge of the science of *Khadi*, its technique, was not as deep as it should have been, nor were the *tapascharyas* and sacrifice adequate to the occasion. Therefore, whilst much was done much more was still to be done before *Khadi* could take its supreme place in the foundation of *Swaraj* to be."

(*Mahatma Gandhi's post-Prayer speech on the 19th April, 1947*).

(29) After the prayers Gandhi reverted to the subject of *Khadi* and announced "that the *Charkha Sangh* had acceded to the proposal of Shri Laxmi Babu and his colleagues that they should be wholly independent of the material support of the *Sangh* while keeping its purely moral authority. If he was the Prime Minister of Bihar and had to select the members of his Government, the latter would stop all new mills and would expect those already established in Bihar to sell all their manufactures at controlled rates outside India and thus gain for Bihar the estimation of the world for generosity. For, there was shortage of cloth everywhere in the world. He would prevent with the consent of the people the sale of mill-cloth in Bihar. Fortunately or unfortunately for Bihar he was not its Prime Minister. Nevertheless, such was the ambition of the *Charkha Sangh* in acceding to Laxmi Babu's



proposal. The expectation was that Laxmi Babu and his colleagues by reason of their independence of the Saag could be better able to push forth their *khadi* programme and make it so popular that Bihar would become wholly independent of mill-cloth. He held that this was quite possible if the people of Bihar gave their whole-hearted co-operation. The villages of Bihar would hum with the soothing music of the *charakha* and the loom. They would bring vitality to the villages of Bihar. *Khadi* would cease to be an article of commerce. The places like Patna would also be manufacturing their own *khadi*. The children of the schools and the students of the colleges would gladly and religiously set apart a certain portion of their time daily for this very necessary constructive work. The city women would equally be expected to do no less. With diligence and will, they would become self-supporting in the matter of *khadi*. Then and then only would *khadi* find its natural place in the economy of the nation. The drudgery of the mill would give place to the joy of creation in their homes and schools." Mahatma Gandhi drew attention to the fact "that whereas the mills needed to import machinery and even skill, to an extent, from outside, all the parts required for the *charakha* and the loom and the required skill were to be found in their villages. He wished, therefore, that the new experiment would find favour with the people of Bihar. It was in that hope that Laxmi Babu and his co-workers had approached their labour of love."

(*Mahatma Gandhi's post-Prayer speech on the 20th April, 1947*).

(30) "This evening too, I must speak to you about *khadi*. The secret lies in hand-spun yarn. From days of yore, spinning had been woman's speciality. Poor soul, she was the slave and man the master who was to pay her the wage that was her due. During the middle ages she had to spin perforce for a mere pittance.

Except for Assam, weaving was considered man's occupation. Hence there is life left in hand-weaving. But there is no room for doubt that it is doomed to extinction if hand-spinning is not revived in all the glory that by right belongs to it. Thus if men and women will not take to hand-spinning as a sacred duty, that is, the same person will not do

carding, slivering and spinning, there is little hope for *khasi*. I am not thinking of *khasi*-wear as a fashion. *Khasi* of my conception is that hand-spun which takes the place entirely in India of mill-cloth. It is beyond my power to give an adequate description of the power that this *khasi* would give to the whole of India.

Such *khasi* must remain a dream if the men of India in their millions will not spin, if only by way of penance, for the sin they have committed against the women, and the women will not do so as a sacred duty. That yarn which may have to be spun for wages will have to bear the same rate per hour that is paid to men for labour. There can be no inequality in wages between the sexes. Lordship of men over women must cease. The days of the lordship are over. That we do not make this admission is a different thing. It cannot arrest the march of events. God has made of man and woman one complete whole. In the scheme of nature both are equal. It has been the object of *khasi* to verify this maxim of sex equality. The *Spinning Association* has not yet succeeded, but the effort is in that direction. Time is coming when a millowner's wife will become a true devotee of *khasi*. Then *khasi* will be supreme to the exclusion of mill cloth in India. May you, women of Bihar, make the mighty effort to bring to an early fruition that happy day!"

(*Mahatma Gandhi's written speech on the 21st April, 1947, which was his day of silence*).

(31) After the prayer, Mahatma Gandhi discussed the affairs of the *Bhadrakanti Taluk Sangh* which was having its sittings for two days. He spoke to the audience that "the Congress had issued a charter to the Sangh and therefore one would expect that in matters of education the Congress would fall back upon its experts and be guided by them. He could not go into the reasons for the anomaly. He merely pointed it out. Dr. Zakir Husain was its President. He was a great educationist and was the soul of the *Jamia Millia*. He was assisted by Shri Aryanayakam and his devoted wife Agha Devi, both of them educationists. He had entered upon its eighth year of existence. It was called the new

method of education for it was not a foreign importation or imposition but was consistent with the environment in India which was predominantly made up of villages. It believed in establishing an equilibrium between the body, the mind and the spirit of which man was made. It was unlike the Western type which was predominantly militarist in which the mind and the body were the primary care of education to the subordination of the spirit. This was best done when education was given through handicrafts. The other speciality was that it was designed to be wholly self-supporting. It did not, therefore, demand an expenditure of millions on education. He hoped next evening to expand the idea underlying self-supporting education."

Speaking in favour of the use of Hindustani by Indians as against English, Mahatma Gandhi stated in the course of his speech that "he had deliberately signed his name in the joint appeal (recently issued over the signatures of Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah and Gandhiji) in Hindi and Urdu."

"Lord Louis Mountbatten," he added, "did not mind this departure from the usual practice on his (Gandhiji's) part because the Viceroy knew that the Britishers would have to quit India shortly."

*(Mahatma Gandhi's post-Prayer speech on the 22nd April, 1947).*

(32) According to his promise of the previous evening, Mahatma Gandhi dealt again with *Nai Talim*, which, he said, "was life-giving whereas education given by the foreign Government was necessarily life-destroying. The latter drained India's wealth, it impoverished its languages and made of us practically slaves. *Nai Talim* covered the whole life. Experience had shown that it had great possibilities and began with the embryo and ended with life itself. It gave new life to all men and women of India. Except for capital expenditure it cost nothing. The teacher earned what they took. It stood for the art of living. Therefore, both the teacher and the pupil had to produce in the very act of teaching and learning. It enriched life from the commencement. It made the nation independent of teach for employment.

Whereas the annual income per head was only rupees sixty *Nai Talim* progressively increased the income.

The villagers would then not be satisfied with mere *satva* and dirty salt for food and rags for clothing. They would have balanced food including milk, fruit and vegetables which they would produce themselves and wear spotless *khadi* which they would spin and weave themselves. Such was promise of every citizen of Free India. Without willing support from the citizens, the governments could do nothing and the governments which did not produce the simple facilities required for the whole task were not worth the salt they ate.<sup>12</sup>

(*Mahatma Gandhi's post-Prayer speech on the 23rd April, 1947*).

(33) Mahatma Gandhi referred to the meetings he had with *Harijans* *muslims* and *satyagrahis* and *khadi* workers. With reference to the former he said that "were touch by the so-called *rajwas* Hindus did not mean the removal of untouchability. Society had made very considerable progress since 1920 both among the touchables and the untouchables. There would be no rest until all distinctions between touchables and untouchables were abolished. It would not do for women to be horrified when they saw *Harijans* girls moving among them on terms of perfect equality. The popular Ministers urged it to society that they undertook all ameliorative measures and brought in legislation without delay. Seeing that the meetings of the *Charitable Society Trustees* and the *Talim Sangh* were held, he hoped that Bihar would lead the way by being first in restoration of her previous relations between the Hindus and the Muslims, giving *khadi* its rightful place and establishing *Nai Talim* in the manner he had suggested."

(*Mahatma Gandhi's post-Prayer speech on the 24th April, 1947*).

(34) Mahatma Gandhi having heard that some Hindus "were whispering to one another that Muslims being beef-eaters were the natural enemies of Hinduism and were, therefore, fit to be destroyed," made remarks about cow-protection. He said that "nearly forty years ago he wrote about it in *Hind Swaraj* in South Africa. He was from his childhood a devotee of the cow. He believed

her to be the natural mother of progeny. But he had expressed the opinion in *Hindu Swaraj* that cow-protection societies were destroyers of the cow and not her protectors. To this view he adhered even today. True devotion to the cow required broad-mindedness and an accurate knowledge of the art and science concerning the protection of the cow. In no country on the earth were the cow and her progeny so ill-treated as in India which, strangely enough, was the only country where the cow was venerated. Their veneration, however, consisted of mere words and deadly quarrel with the Muslims over cow-killing. The very Hindus who quarrelled with the Muslims because they slaughtered the cow for the beef she gave were not ashamed to accept the mastery of the English who were known to be beef-eaters in a sense in which the Muslims never were. He had no quarrel with the Englishmen because they ate beef and as such he had none with the Muslims either. He was concerned with showing the great inconsistency of the Hindus who for the sake of money gladly served their English masters and quarrelled with the Muslims. Then they forgot that there were Hindus who gladly partook of beef. He had known orthodox Vaishnavas who ate beef-extract, when it was prescribed by their doctors. He reminded the audience of the fact that during the *Khilafat* days thousands of cows were saved from the Muslim knife. The late Maulana Abdul Bari used to say that if the Hindus helped the Muslims to save the *Khilafat*, the Muslims were bound to save the cow for the sake of the Hindus. From every point of view, therefore, he held that it was insane on the part of the Hindus to be angry with their Muslim brethren because they ate beef and slaughtered cows. He quoted numerous instances to show the utterly inconsistent behaviour of the Hindus in this matter. He, therefore, asked the Hindus to put their own house in order before it tottered to its ruin."

(*Mahatma Gandhi's post-Prayer speech on the 25th April, 1947*).

There was no prayer speech on the 26th April, as Mahatma Gandhi had to attend the meeting of the *Jamiat-e-Islam*.

(35) Mahatma Gandhi referred "to his visit the previous evening to the meeting of the *Jamiat-e-Islam*. He was told

that its members were truly servants of God, austere and simple in their habits, with a message of self-purification and self-realization for the Musalmans. Religion was sustained never by the sword but always by men of God. But they should be so not merely in name but by their conduct. The audience had gladly allowed him to go to these friends. If, however, there were some who thought that he was uselessly pandering to the Muslims by giving them undue importance, he would say that it was pride that dictated such foolishness. Such pride ill-became the votaries of Rama about whom the evening's *Shajan* had been sung.

The Muslims formed only 14 per cent of the population. It became his duty, therefore, as a member of the majority community to go to them in all humanity whenever they invited him.

The song that had been sung at the prayer taught that only Rama (God, Allah or by whatever name one might call Him) was the true object of worship. He was not won over by offerings, except the offering of noble conduct.

Universal love became incumbent on Rama's devotees. That was the only way in which Hinduism or for that matter any religion could survive. Hinduism or any religion that departed from this straight path was doomed to destruction."

*(Mahatma Gandhi's post-Prayer speech on the 27th April, 1947).*

(36) "I am sorry to let you know that I shall have to go to Delhi again, by the morning train on the 30th. There is a call from Pandit Nehru. Rastropati Kripalani has also sent a telegram from Rajputana that I should be in Delhi by the first May, as the *Congress Working Committee* meets on that day. It pains me to leave you at this stage. I do not relish the idea of leaving Bihar unless the Mussalmans have completely shed their fear and both the communities allow me to leave with a clear conscience. I felt the same when I left Noakhali. For both these places I have the same motto before me, '*Do or Die*.' My non-violence bids me dedicate myself to the service of the minorities. It would be like a new birth and give me additional strength if the Hindus and the Musalmans of both these places began to live at

peace with each other and shed their animosity. God knows what will come out of this travail. Man can only try and perish in the attempt. God is all in all. We are only zeroes. The same mission takes me to Delhi. I hope to return within a short time and resume duty.

You may be astonished to learn that I continue to receive letters charging me that I have compromised the interest of the Hindus by acting as a friend of the Muslims. How can I convince people by mere words if the sixty years of my public life have failed to demonstrate that by trying to befriend the Muslims I have only proved myself a true Hindu and have rightly served the Hindus and Hinduism? The essence of true religious teaching is that one should serve and befriend all. I learnt this in my mother's lap. You may refuse to call me a Hindu. I know no defence except to quote a line from Iqbal's famous song: *Maqasad-e-khaleq nikhata apasman har rakhne* meaning religion does not teach us to bear ill-will towards one another. It is easy enough to be friendly to one's friends. But to befriend the one who regards himself as your enemy, is the quintessence of true religion. The other is mere business."

*(Written speech of Mahatma Gandhi on the 28th April, 1947, which was his day of silence).*

Referring to his brief visit to Delhi for which he would leave the next morning Mahatma Gandhi requested the people not "to crowd at the station. It would be a true mark of affection if they abstained from interrupting his rest or work by their shouts which he could ill bear at his age."

*(Mahatma Gandhi's post-Prayer speech on the 29th April, 1947).*

(37) Mahatma Gandhi addressed the prayer gathering on the 15th May, 1947, on the *Beashtar Maidan* at Patna after a fortnight. "In the interval," he said, "he had been to Delhi and Calcutta. He had not foreseen his visit to Calcutta. For, his vow of 'do or die' was taken only for Noakhali and Bihar. But what he heard about Calcutta made him feel that he might be of some use there. And he could say that he had not been entirely unsuccessful. In Calcutta also he was serving Bihar. For the cause was the same. By going to Calcutta

or elsewhere, where he might be called upon to go in future, though the possibility was very remote, he did not leave out Bihar or Noakhali. It only extended the field of the operation of his 'de ar die' mission. He felt that success at one place would be followed by success at other places. The future was, however, in God's hands."

During his absence Gandhiji had kept himself "informed about the work going on in Bihar. During the day he had received more information. Affairs in Bihar moved slowly. The Biharis were, however, not slow when they committed acts of madness. There was no reason why they should be slow in making amends. The rains were coming. They were working against time. The Ministry had concentrated the control of rehabilitation work in Asquith Sahab's hands for the sake of efficiency. General Shah Nawaz, who had gone on a short leave, would be presently in their midst. If sufficient capable women workers imbued with the spirit of loving service came forward to work among the Muslim women, he felt sure the work would go forward."

Mahatma Gandhi "was sure that if Bihar succeeded in instilling confidence in the Muslims, her influence would be felt throughout India. Some Hindus wrote to Gandhiji to ask if he expected them to flatter and fawn on the Mussalmans. He, as a life-long fighter with truth and ahimsa as his weapons, could not countenance that. What he counselled was the control of their baser instincts of anger and hatred. And if avoiding harshness and adopting perfect gentleness was flattery, he would not hesitate to use that word."

Mahatma Gandhi then informed the congregation that "he could not bear the strain of touring every place in the heat. He had to content himself with holding his prayer meeting at different places every day."

(*Mahatma Gandhi's post-Prayer speech on the 15th May, 1947*).

(38) Mahatma Gandhi in his post-Prayer speech at Gulzarbagh on the 16th May, 1947, referred to his visit to the refugee camp nearby prior to the Prayer meeting. "He had not been able to see it as thoroughly as he would have liked to do.



But what he saw and heard from the Superintendent made him really glad.

The camp was being run on the principle of self-help. Men worked and were paid their due. The children also worked, though they were paid more than what they would be otherwise entitled to. Such self help breeds self-respect.

They were innocent men and women, who had suffered at the hands of the Hindus who had gone temporarily insane. It was their (the Hindus') duty, therefore, to make all amends they could. They should go and visit the refugees in the camp, interest themselves in every detail of their life, and seek to help them in every way they could. If they did that it would be in part payment of the debt that they owed to the refugees whom they had wronged.

Similarly, about the refugees who had left the Province through fear or due to false propaganda, the Hindus need not beg them to come back. They should win them back by the magnetic power of their love. If they could create such an atmosphere of affection and brotherliness, most of the Muslims who had left the Province would return. His work and that of the Government would be considerably lightened. And Bihar would truly become the Province of Spring as its name signified."

*(Mahatma Gandhi's post-Prayer speech on the 16th May, 1947).*

(39) On the 17th May, Mahatma Gandhi did not address the prayer gathering at Dinapore "because of the noise at the meeting which included a large number of women and children."

"A large congregation had assembled at the prayer ground and thousands of men and women continued pouring in. With all efforts the noise created by the crowd could not be stopped. Gandhiji, therefore, dispensed with the usual practice of two minutes silence during the prayer."

Mahatma Gandhi told the gathering that "he felt that he was defeated in his attempt to make them hear what he wanted to say. He felt sorry for that. He told the audience that he was leaving the prayer ground without addressing them."

(49) "In the course of the message Mahatma Gandhi stated that it pained him that the day before he had to keep a very large number of audience, who attended the prayer meeting, without being able to give them his usual message. He thought that due to the carelessness or inefficiency of the volunteers or because of an insufficiency of loud-speakers the eager and vast crowd had to go away disappointed. Such failures should be a matter of shame for us and we should learn to keep order even when we gather in hundreds of thousands."

Mahatma Gandhi further stated that "if we were not able to observe this elementary rule of good conduct, he was afraid, we would not be able to retain our hard-won independence. Democracy required that every one, man or woman, should realise his or her responsibility. That was, he thought, what was meant by *Panchajanya* Raj. If any limb of the body ceased to function properly the whole body became slack. Similarly the whole of India was one body and the individuals were its limbs. If one limb should become slack or useless, the whole body would suffer proportionately. That was why he laid so much stress on lack of discipline at meetings, in railway trains or at railway stations."

Mahatma Gandhi went on to say that "he would go so far as to feel that if they had been trained to keep order at all gatherings, the Bihar riots would have been an impossibility."

Today any disturbance was given a communal colour with the result that what was not meant to be a communal conflict turned into one. The volunteers, therefore, should realize how important it was to teach the people to keep order whenever they congregated. This would not be accomplished by merely attempting it when meetings were actually being held. Previous training was necessary. Volunteers must go from house to house and give the people this necessary adult education."

Mahatma Gandhi suggested that "the volunteers should aim at taking them again to Dinapur and to that end prepare the people for perfect silence and other observances of

the laws of meetings and when they were sure they could take him back when he returned from Delhi. That would be a good object lesson."

(*Writer's message of Mahatma Gandhi on the 18th May, 1947, which was his day of silence*).

(41) Mahatma Gandhi addressed 'a huge but a perfectly quiet audience' at Barh in the evening of the 19th May, 1947. He "congratulated the audience and the volunteers for the perfect order maintained. With the advent of their own Government the latter had to play the new role of builders of the nation, for which they required to build considerably on the constructive training received incidentally during their fight against the foreign Government because of the non-violent character of the fight.

His topic, however, for the evening, was the great sin Bihar had committed and its atonement. He warned the people against falling into the snare of the seemingly plausible argument that in view of Muslim provocation, retaliation was inevitable and the only effective method of putting an end to it. To answer brutality with brutality was to admit one's moral and intellectual bankruptcy and it could only start a vicious circle of which they had already seen so many manifestations. He could only say that if they continued their mad game, they would not be able to retain the independence that was coming.

Barh was one of those fortunate places which did not entirely go mad. But it could not escape the responsibility for the acts of those around it. It was difficult to estimate what India had already lost through madmen like Bihar's or what she might have to lose in future. The only way to escape the consequences of their acts was to show genuine repentance and thus lighten the heavy responsibility of Ansari Sahab, with which he had been entrusted by the Ministry. The people should refuse to shelter criminals, who had acted barbarously or who were still threatening the returning Muslims under the false belief that they had done something heroic. How it could be heroic, he failed to understand."

To the criminals Mahatma Gandhi said that "as a mark of true repentance they should surrender themselves to the police and bear the punishment that might be meted out to them. Even otherwise it was in their interest to surrender, for if the Government and the police did their duty—which they must if they wanted to justify their existence—they would be arrested sooner or later. A voluntary surrender was bound to win them consideration from the court. What he had said should not be dismissed as a counsel of cowardice.

Inculcation of cowardice was against his nature. Ever since his return from South Africa, where a few thousand had stood up not unsuccessfully against heavy odds, he had made it his mission to preach true bravery which admits defeat. They could not forget how in their own Province the age-long tyranny of the indigo planters was swept off in six months in Champaran through non-violent resistance. They had to show the same bravery to a much greater extent if they wanted to get out of the abyss in which the country was being plunged at the time."

*(Mahatma Gandhi's post-Prayer speech on the 19th May, 1947).*

(42) In the evening on the 20th May, Mahatma Gandhi's prayer was held at Hilsa, "one of the worst affected areas in the riots." Addressing the gathering after the prayer was over he said that "it was a matter of great shame and sorrow. But the shame of the sin could be turned to good account by adequate repentance. All the religions that he had studied were full of instances proving the maxim: 'the greater the sinner the greater the saint.' For the poignancy of the pain of the guilt enhanced the joy that a guiltless life brought with it. The speaker wished that the maxim could be proved true in the reformed life of the people of Hilsa. They would be repelled by physical dirt. Surely the repulsion caused by mental dirt which the insanity of the Hindus of Hilsa meant was much greater than the pain caused by any physical dirt however great. He was wondering how he could awaken genuine repentance in the hearts of the Hindus of Hilsa. It had been suggested to him that if he settled down in Hilsa and went

from house to house, he would be able to effect the desired transformation. Although there was truth in the remark, he must own his physical weakness and consequent inability to follow the advice. They were none the better for his confession. He hoped, therefore, that his remarks would penetrate the hearts of the large audience and that they would invite the Muslim sufferers to return.

He had been told that many Muslims came to see the place and finding it unprepared left it. He expected them to help the process of renovation of the shattered houses. The rainy season was approaching. They should, therefore, be quick about their work. Till then it was their duty to accommodate the Muslims in their own houses as they would accommodate their own blood relations. The Hindus and the Muslims had lived like blood relations in Bihar before. There was no reason why they should not revive the old time.

If the Hindus showed the spirit of brotherliness it would be good for Bihar, for India and the world."

*(Mahatma Gandhi's post-Prayer speech on the 20th May, 1947)*

(43) Mahatma Gandhi addressed a mammoth gathering at Bikram in the evening of the 21st May, 1947. He "congratulated the audience for the perfect quiet maintained throughout the prayer and the correct beating of time in the singing of *Ravdhua*.

He also congratulated them for keeping their sanity while insanity raged all round—thanks to the efforts of Congressmen and other Hindus. Still some tension did exist and many Muslims left the place out of fear. As the houses were intact, the problem of their repair did not arise. The Hindus could, however, clean up lanes and houses deserted by the Muslims and create such an atmosphere of hospitality that the Muslims would be forced to return."

Mahatma Gandhi next "took up the thread of his talk at Hilsa where he had dropped it the day before. He had heard from various quarters that ever since the acceptance of office by the Congress it was abandoning its tradition of penance, sacrifice and service, so painfully built up during its glorious history of over 60 years, from its humble beginnings in 1885

to the present day when it had become a mighty organization having millions of followers. They said that it was fast becoming an organization of selfish power-seekers and job-hunters. Instead of remaining the servants of the public, Congressmen had become its lords and masters. The Congress was, moreover, torn by petty intrigues and group rivalries. What he said was true of all the Provinces. If that continued, he was afraid Indians would not be able to retain the precious thing that was approaching. For that they required knowledge, understanding and purity of mind. If the Congress and the League did not retain the requisite purity and strength, they would find all power slipping from their hands. They could not hope to maintain it with the help of the bayonets like the British. All their power came from the people, who were the real masters, though they might not realize it at the moment. The Congress won their confidence through years of service. If it betrayed them, he was afraid, they would fall a prey to the white-robed *gandhis* of society in whose hands all power would pass.

He had come to Bihar for solving the Hindu-Muslim problem but things were so interrelated that he was forced to take up other issues as well. He had, therefore, dwelt on the corruption that was coming in the Congress. The Congress should be above party intrigues and be symbol of unity and service of the whole of India.

(Mahatma Gandhi's post-Prayer speech on the 21st May, 1947).

(44) "Explaining to the huge congregation at Fatepur how the people could make the best of his present programme of holding his prayer meeting at different places everyday," Mahatma Gandhi said that "if the people living within a radius of five miles from the place of the prayer could walk up to it, which they could easily do, instead of waiting for him on the roadside, they would not have to disturb his rest on the way and would have the additional advantage of hearing his message.

He knew that a peace committee had been formed to work in the disturbed areas. Such a committee should have

on it all the influential Hindus and all the Muslims of the Province who formed after all a very small percentage."

Mahatma Gandhi next explained "how women could help in the work of rehabilitation. Fortunately, most of the Hindu women were free from *pardah*. There *pardah* should be of the heart. Whatever sanction outward *pardah* might have in any religion, it was entirely out of keeping with the present times.

Hindu women, therefore, could and should freely mix with their Muslim sisters and share their pain and sorrow. He had heard, that at the Masauhi milk distributing centre, the Muslim children were objecting to taking milk in cups already used by the Hindu children. This should not make the Hindus angry. It was their own untouchability practised against the Muslims and others which had infected the Muslims. Otherwise, untouchability should be foreign to the spirit of Islam. Hindu women, unalienated by this new sad development and full of the spirit of love and service, could perform the noble task of creating understanding among their Muslim sisters."

Mahatma Gandhi further referred "to an incident related to him by his grand-daughter who had just come back from the hospital. The sad significance of that incident was that with the advent of power, Congressmen had begun to think that everything belonged to them. In a way it was true. But that did not imply that all sense of discipline should be thrown to the winds. Discipline and true humility should be a matter of pride for Congressmen."

Mahatma Gandhi also dwelt "on black-marketing that was rampant in Bihar as in other Provinces. If the people made up their minds not to buy from the black market even if they had to starve, the evil would end at once. He also advised the merchant class to become honest. For, black-marketing was criminal when the country was passing through a period of acute shortage of cloth and food grains, and Dr. Rajendra Prasad was saying in Madras that unless food came from outside, he saw no way to prevent starvation. He could not subscribe to this cry of despair. If all followed his advice,

none need starve in this land which was capable of producing all the food grains it required rather than be reduced to the position of a beggar. Australia had offered to sell food grains to India provided the latter sold her linseed in return. Such bargaining spirit ill became any country when dealing with another country in dire need. Such were however the ways of the world."

(*Mahatma Gandhi's post-Prayer speech on the 22nd May, 1947*).

(45) "After making a feeling reference to Saint Makhdam Maneri who lived about eight hundred years ago at Maneri," where the evening prayer was held on the 23rd May, 1947, Mahatma Gandhi proceeded to say that "in Maneri though communal tension had existed it had been saved from actual rioting by the efforts of *Congressmen*. As he had said the day before due to the interrelations of things he could not help taking up other questions along with the present task of rehabilitation. He referred to the question of the landlords.

They all knew the century-old *Raj* of white indigo planters ended by the determined will and concerted action of all the people and their leaders, the most well-known of whom were the late Buxishore Babu and Rajendra Babu, but he was told that the tyranny of white *Raj* was being continued today by the Indian *zamindars* who exploited their *ryots* economically, terrorized them through their officials and escaped due punishment through collusion with the authorities. If it was true, the *zamindars* were digging their own graves. Their future lay only in being the trustees for their tenants.

But as a man of truth and justice, he must also dwell on the other side of the picture presented to him by the *zamindars* who recognized him as a friend because of his universal friendliness, although they knew his identity with the masses. They told him that with the coming of *Congress Raj*, drawing its sanction from the masses, the *ryots* felt that they could commit all sorts of excesses, dispossess *zamindars* of their entire property, destroy their crops and terrorize them by other acts of violence. Similarly, labourers in mills thought under the influence of false propaganda that they could become the masters of the mills by damaging them.



As one of the masses he could only say to the peasants and industrial labour that they were harming their own cause by that senseless policy. They were the real masters but they must realise their strength, and know its use. By going mad, the millions could easily destroy a handful of zamindars but ultimately their madness would turn against themselves.

He also heard destructive criticism of the Government by people who could not themselves wield the power that had come to the nation and would not let those wield it who could. The Ministers on the other hand should be real servants of the people from whom they derived their power, free from nepotism and corruption, meting out even justice to all.

If all the three—the zamindars, the ryots and the Government—in Bihar did their duty, Bihar would give a noble example to the whole of India."

(Mahatma Gandhi's post-Prayer speech on the 23rd May, 1947).

6462



## INDEX

### A

- A.F. Hamid*, 30  
*Abanikabai Gokhale*, 87, 124  
*Abdul Aziz*, 34  
*Abdul Bari*, Prof., 34, 35, 45, 52, 53  
     308, 309, 317  
*Abdul Bari Saqui*, 53  
*Abdulla Chowk*, 37  
*Abdul Ghaffar Khan*, 36, 37, 38,  
     39, 40, 43, 46, 52, 53  
*Abdul Qayyum Ansari*, 54  
*Kabul Kader Sobhani*, 2  
*Abdul Hayat Chaudh*—40, 42  
*Abdus*—98, 99, 119, 127  
*Acharya Narendra Dev*—29  
*Agatha Harman*, Mm., 242  
*Agarian Act*—81  
*Agartia*, Committee,—130, 131,  
     132, 133, 134, 140  
     Ed—142  
*Ahmedabad*—117  
*Ahmed*—35, 69, 70, 79, 83, 129  
*Ahira*, 54  
*Aham Khan*—46  
*Alexander*—173  
*Ali Brothers*, 11, 12  
*Ali Imam*, Sur 1  
*Allahganj*, 52, 303, 305  
*Allahabad*—227  
*All India Gandhi Seta Sangh*—30  
*All India Congress Committee*—28, 29,  
     185  
*All India Doshbandh Memorial Fund*—  
     10, 176, 180, 183, 193, 201, 209  
*All India Students' Association (A.I.  
     S.A.)*—179, 184, 201, 207,  
     209, 210, 214, 221, 341, 312, 314,  
     *Alpana* *arbitar*—71  
*Amathas*, 48  
     Relief Camp—49, 301  
*American Friends' Society* 67  
     *anar*—97  
*Amolwa*—123  
*Anandibai Bhaubhangarra*, Mm., 57  
*Andar*—42, 43  
*Andhra*—188  
*Andrews*—173, 174, 176  
*Anglo-Jahaw Amaratas*—140  
*Anne Beanti*, Mm., 2  
*Anari*, Dr 28  
*Anzari Sahib*—320  
*Anugrah Narayan Sinha*, Dr., 1, 40,  
     43, 45, 46, 85  
*Arasayakam*, Shm—314  
*Aravis*—10, 21, 260  
*Arishan Singh*, 3  
*Arish*—25, 27, 196, 164 210, 220  
*Asha Devi*—314  
*aripag*—154  
*Ashcalpur*—35  
*Asham*—14  
     Boulhan—18  
     Gandhi—48, 72, 74, 87  
*Asian Conference*—45  
*Asam*—3, 25, 28, 29, 313  
*Assamite Poor Talagaw*, 114  
*Asargara*, 59  
*Atal Chandra Sam*—17  
*Aurangabad*, 169, 215  
*Awadhesh Kumar Sinha*—40  
*Acad Hind Fast*—45  
*Aad Sahib*—162  
*Achani Haque*, 304

B

Bahadur Sahani, 36, 39  
 Badrakhi—46  
 Badshah Khan, 30, 42, 52, 262, 263,  
 294  
 Bagchiwar Prasad, 16  
 Bahram, 43, 45  
 Bahrawan, 288  
 Badyanath Choudhary, 34  
 Bahad—8  
 Bania Factory—114  
 Bakshiana—125  
 Bala—202  
 Bangra—157  
 Banks—191  
 Bankpur—116, 151  
 Bankey Lal Das—16, 30, 37, 44, 45,  
 46, 53, 58, 295, 319  
 Banwaran Ram Choudhary, 27  
 Baroda—108  
 Barclay, Mr.—102, 103  
 Barh—20, 66  
 Barharwa Lakshman, 123  
 Barisal—224  
 Barm—28, 41  
 Bastian Char—48  
 Basapur, 108  
 Bazar—73, 139  
 Bedaul—18  
 Bero Naryan Choud, 24  
 Begumani—221  
 Bela—52  
 Belai—43, 49  
 Belgaum—135, 206  
 Belhand—48  
 Belwa—105, 123  
 Belwar, 219  
 Bengal—34, 73, 154, 173, 173, 188,  
 223, 263, 263, 292, 293, 294  
 Bengal Tenancy Act, 104, 127, 131  
 Betiah—71, 93, 100, 114, 116, 117,  
 144, 189, 205  
 Bhat—99  
 Bhatnagar—112  
 Bhaidal Thakur Bada, 104  
 Bhagadpur, 3, 19, 46, 121, 146, 172,  
 180, 191, 203, 247

Bhagwat Das, Mahant, 306, 309  
 Bhagwan Das, Shrinani, 242  
 Bham—236  
 Bhatnagar—5, 89, 125  
 Bhikshai Dasa—28  
 Bhupendra Nath Basu, 4, 72  
 Bhat—110  
 Bhutnath—161  
 Bhatia Chandra Roy, Dr. 28  
 Bhat—96, 102, 103, 108  
 Bhat—1, 3, 3, 4, 5, 5, 5, 7, 9, 11, 15,  
 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 57, 58, 49, 53,  
 54, 56, 57, 58, 59, 63, 71, 73, 74,  
 75, 85, 90, 100, 112, 130, 130,  
 144, 148, 151, 156, 159, 161, 163,  
 164, 167, 169, 170, 171, 172, 173,  
 177, 179, 181, 188, 194, 201, 202,  
 209, 211, 212, 213, 221, 222, 223,  
 229, 235, 236, 237, 238, 241, 245,  
 247, 248, 251, 256, 263, 269, 270,  
 271, 272, 273, 276, 277, 282, 283,  
 284, 285, 286, 288, 289, 290, 291,  
 293, 294, 295, 296, 299, 300, 301,  
 302, 304, 305, 307, 309, 310, 311,  
 312, 313, 314, 316, 318, 319, 320  
 Civil Relief Committee—13, 16,  
 18, 20  
 Landholders' Association—46  
 Madras Relief Fund—37, 58, 40,  
 41, 43, 245  
 National College—7  
 Nurses' Association—129  
 Provincial Congress Committee—1,  
 34, 35, 40, 52  
 Provincial Conference—2, 6, 179  
 Provincial Madras League, 34, 35  
 State Enquiry—307  
 Bihar Shanti—8, 45, 46, 309  
 Bihar Nagark, 7, 201, 211, 240  
 Bhopur—348  
 Bikaner—60  
 Bikanerganj, 8  
 Birn, Mr. 134  
 Bir—4, 12, 43, 60, 291  
 Bircolia Bahadur, Samba—38  
 Bokenhead, Lord, 227

Hindu Movements—1  
 Hols—304  
 Bombay—5, 73, 83, 123, 163, 188  
 Brahmarshi Ram Raksha—157, 158  
 Bahmanistan—262  
 Banjishore Prasad—5, 18, 71, 72, 74,  
 75, 78, 79, 82, 83, 85, 94, 120,  
 126, 129, 136, 153, 238, 239, 268  
 Bani, Mr—248

C. P. N. Singh, Sh—34, 45  
 C.R. Das—154  
 Calcutta—4, 67  
     Direct Action—82, 68, 72, 138,  
     181, 198, 225, 244, 268, 319  
 Cartwright, Mrs—67  
 Cawnpur—72  
 Central Legislative Assembly 32  
 Central Relief Committee—29, 23,  
 241, 247, 248  
 Chakradharpur—184, 185  
 Chasra—28, 97  
 Champaran—2, 4, 30, 71, 72, 76, 77,  
 78, 79, 83, 84, 82, 83, 88, 89, 90,  
 95, 96, 100, 110, 111, 112, 116,  
 117, 122, 123, 126, 129, 130, 131,  
 132, 133, 134, 135, 136, 137, 140,  
 141, 142, 143, 222, 283, 286, 319  
     Agrarian Bill—5, 126, 129  
     Satyagraha—83  
 Chandra Mahto—49  
 Chandi Thana Congress Committee—33  
 Chandigarh—18  
 Chandigarh—39  
 Chandra—17, 18, 165, 212, 213, 214,  
 215, 241, 242  
 Chandra—5, 10, 136, 153, 169, 182,  
 183, 185, 192, 197, 204, 212, 219,  
 223, 228, 229, 232, 244, 262, 263,  
 311, 318  
     Sargh—312  
     Sargh Temple—316

Dalbhadar Giri—14, 237  
 Dabingpara—214, 215  
 Dabongary—212, 213, 215

Dandapan, 30, 239  
 Datta—264  
 Datta—1, 69, 149, 150, 154, 155,  
 158, 250, 297  
 Datta Sahu Halwai—101  
 Datta—17  
 Dattas—73  
 Datta—20, 249  
 Datta—8, 250

## C

Chandra 166, 169  
 Chaudhary, Lakhand—11, 201  
 Chaudhary Sarafat Hussain—26  
 Chaudhary Jai—28  
 Chelmsford, Lord—263  
 Chhazam—109  
 Chhabdars Girdar—164  
 Chhatrapati—1, 31, 34, 162, 211,  
 212  
 Chhitham, Dr 74  
 Civil Disobedience Movement—29, 84,  
 260, 261, 264, 266  
 Cole—1  
 Committee of Enquiry—4, 91, 114,  
 117  
 Communism—38  
 Congress—1, 16, 28, 30, 31, 36, 46,  
 48, 51, 52, 53, 57, 58, 62, 63, 64,  
 68, 71, 72, 73, 78, 79, 144, 150,  
 156, 158, 159, 177, 178, 188, 207,  
 218, 225, 254, 256, 258, 262, 264,  
 267, 268, 269, 270, 272, 299, 309,  
 312, 314  
 Working Committee—5, 263, 318  
     Subject Committee—263  
     Parliamentary Board—29

Court—115  
     Court, High—113, 119, 147  
 Cox, Mr—51, 94  
 Cuffman—225

## D

Dabhangra—14, 15, 46, 75, 163, 263,  
 213, 214, 218, 220, 223, 225, 246  
 Dada—122

Bakaria—33  
 Barage—145  
 Barua—97, 100  
 Baruaapur—46  
 Bazar—94, 103, 106, 123, 140  
 Baswan—35  
 Biv Prakash—33  
 Bew, Dr 6, 88, 89, 116, 122, 136  
 Bewala—87  
 Deep Narayan Singh—2, 19, 247  
 Delhi—38, 37, 58, 59, 152, 318, 319  
 Deoghar—27, 191, 193, 251  
 Deshabandhu—181  
     Avtar—181  
     Rosh—182  
 Dev Raj, Shri—242  
 Devaki Prasad Sinha, Babu—164  
 Dharna—154

Earthquake—17, 21, 23, 26  
 East Bengal—20, 32  
 East India Company—163, 384  
 Ehsadulah Ghosh—384

Fatwah—33, 34  
 Fatehpur—68  
 Forteganj—10, 20, 300, 301  
 Frank Sy, Sir—91, 133

G.B.B. College—3  
 G. M. Dadco—Dr. 43  
 Galkunda—183  
 Gandak—17, 218, 245  
 Gandhi, Mahatma, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7,  
     8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15, 16, 17,  
     18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26,  
     27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35,  
     36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44,  
     45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53,  
     55, 57, 58, 59, 60, 63, 68, 69, 89,  
     140, 141, 143, 151, 152, 153, 173,  
     175, 180, 182, 183, 191, 192, 194,  
     202, 206, 207, 208, 212, 213, 215,  
     216, 217, 218, 220, 221, 222, 223,  
     225, 226, 240, 241, 282, 244, 245,

Dhanbad—53  
 Dharmadhar Prasad—3, 77, 83  
 Dharti—98  
 Dhokanba—105, 111, 114  
 Dhat—137  
 Dhrapau—4, 17, 44, 243, 244, 295  
 District Boards—11  
     Saran—17, 98  
 Division of Bihar Conference—54  
 Dvide Bihar—54  
 Dutt Singh—46  
 Derman Lal—51  
 Drupadi—236  
 Durgachow—14, 237  
 Durga Desai, Smt 87  
 Durbar Vignawala—235  
 Dyas—146

# E

Edward Goss, Sir—4, 31  
 Ekam—213, 215  
 Ekta—108

# F

Frontier Province—202  
 Frontier Gandha—39  
 Frontier Red Shari—34  
 Fulkara—20

# G

246, 247, 249, 250, 251, 254, 256,  
 259, 263, 270, 271, 272, 273, 275,  
 277, 278, 279, 280, 281, 282, 283,  
 284, 285, 286, 287, 288, 289, 290,  
 293, 294, 295, 296, 297, 298, 299,  
 300, 301, 302, 303, 304, 305, 306,  
 307, 308, 309, 310, 311, 312, 313,  
 314, 315, 316, 317, 319, 320  
 Gandhi Address, 171  
 Gandhi, Megaridul—See Megaridul  
     Gandhi  
 Gandhi Address, 34, 36  
 Gandhi Saw Singh, 257  
 Gangadharan Deshpande—86  
 Gangaram Sharma—161  
 Gangavara—52, 303,

Ganges, 73, 78, 100, 212, 216, 265  
 Garabakh (Gharbakh) 43, 291  
 Garol, 171  
 Gaya, 8, 46, 50, 54, 141, 142, 163,  
 166, 168, 169, 212, 214, 215, 216,  
 233, 234  
 Gaya Babu, 74, 75  
 Gharanafu Ak, Raja, 31  
 Ghosi Police Station, 47  
 Gibson, Ma, 235  
 Giridih, 160, 193, 194, 196, 197  
 Girish Chandra Maumundia, 143  
 Girish Trami, 46, 49,  
 Gita, 274, 286  
 Gladys Owen, Miss, 45, 46  
 Gokhale, Mr, 123, 125, 178, 225  
 Gokhale, Mrs, 123  
 Gokul Krishna Rao, 21  
 Gokul Muzer, 164  
 Gokunda, 160  
 Gopalganj, 157  
 Gorakh Nath Treaty, 17  
 Gorakh Prasad, 3, 77, 78, 83  
 Gordon Canning, Ma, 135,  
 Gourlay, Mr, 162

Haemchar, 33  
 Hajipur, 16, 18, 157, 167, 171, 201,  
 262  
 Haudika, 41, 44  
 Harpan, 15, 28, 26, 28, 58, 243, 244,  
 245, 250, 252, 263, 264, 316  
 Harpan Field 77, 20  
 Harpan Industrial School, 28  
 Harpan Pathside, 26  
 Haria, 43, 229  
 Hassary, 168  
 Haudika, 50  
 Hazaribagh, 166, 169, 164  
 Hites, 36, 68  
 Himalayas, 78, 100, 200, 304, 261  
 Hindu, 26, 76, 83, 87, 124, 223, 224,  
 229, 315

*JNA*—59, 60, 63, 65  
 Indigo, 3, 11, 71  
 Indian, 1, 9, 15, 21, 32, 89, 96, 136,

Conamkhan, 42, 43  
 Juprat—133, 133,  
*Juprat Provincial Conference*, 6  
*Juprat Polytechnic (Convocation)*,  
 225, 226  
 Juprat, 8, 77, 87  
 Kulk Sahu Karm, 101  
 Kulkaribagh, 320  
 Kundwara Harmandir, 39  
 Guru Gobind Singh, 39  
 Government—4, 7, 13, 16, 17, 18,  
 22, 33, 48, 50, 54, 53, 56, 57, 64,  
 65, 66, 69, 77, 78, 80, 81, 82, 90,  
 94, 94, 99, 105, 104, 105, 106, 112,  
 113, 114, 115, 116, 118, 121, 122,  
 125, 127, 128, 130, 131, 132, 137,  
 144, 115, 116, 118, 121, 122, 125,  
 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 137,  
 144, 146, 149, 154, 155, 156, 158,  
 159, 160, 165

*Government College*, 74  
*Government Industrial House*, 38  
 Governor, 38, 91, 156, 156  
 Governor, Lt, 4, 81  
 Gyron Award, 296

## H

*Hind Society*, 316, 317  
*Hind Library*, 11  
*Hindu Mahasabha*, 52, 179, 216, 303  
*Hindu Muslim*, 10, 26, 52, 63, 69, 137,  
*Hindustani*, 31, 45, 263, 297, 313  
*Hiranagar Lohar*, 110  
*Hindustan Tobacco Singh*, 311, 314,  
 315  
 Hitler, 72  
 Hogg, 15, 16  
*Hob*, 31, 271, 272, 273, 304  
*Hone Rule Movement*, 2  
 Holman, 165  
 Hugh Dow, Sec, 33, 53  
*Hunda*, 103, 114  
 Humnabad, 167

## I

137, 149, 150, 156, 157, 158, 261,  
 262, 284, 287, 301, 315  
 India, 2, 12, 14, 31, 39, 40, 44, 56,

58, 60, 72, 80, 83, 113, 125, 136,  
138, 139, 143, 144, 145, 149, 150,  
154, 152, 155, 156, 157, 161, 162,  
169, 174, 176, 196, 204, 206, 209,  
223, 226, 228, 233, 245, 254, 266,  
287, 289, 270, 271, 272, 273, 278,  
279, 283, 284, 286, 287, 291, 294,  
297, 299, 302, 303, 311, 312, 314,  
315, 316, 317, 320

*India League*, 42

*Indian National Congress*—1, 2, 3, 4,  
104-267

*Individual Civil Disobedience Movement*, 31

*India and the War Crisis*, 31

*Inter-Asian Relations Conference*, 58

*Irons*, Mr., 168, 114, 121, 128, 153,  
185, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140

*Iqbal*, 219

# J

J B. Kripalani, Acharya, 3, 53, 74,  
85, 86, 222, 318

J W. Macdonald, 35

Jadavai—110

Jagat Nanyan Lal,—38

Jagadeva Rai—37

Jinardan Jha, Pt., 167

Jipul—110

Jamadar (Jamedar), 104

Jamulpur, 20

Jamson, 128

Jesse Mills, 314

Jamia-ul-Uloom—Bihar Provincial—  
36, 54

Jamnalalji—8, 9, 17, 257, 312

Jambhaji Tata—173

Jambhadrji—173, 211, 308

Jamnia—26

Jamni—172

Janak—71, 169, 201

Jankikham Prasad, 3, 45, 143, 202,  
204, 207

Jardih, 27

Jawaharlal Nehru, 32, 33, 175, 201,  
209, 312, 318

Jayapalash Narayan, 34, 35, 51

Jehanghad, 35, 46, 47, 48, 49, 51,  
52, 54, 300, 303, 305

Jevons, Prof., 227

Jharia, 8, 214

Jinash, Mr., 58, 263, 268, 306, 315

Jindchi, 212

Johnson, Mr., 112, 114

Jogra, 153

Joras Chapra, 16, 18

# K

Kake, 47

Kamal Das, 46

Kamtaul, 19

Kankar, 23

Kapasia, 187, 210, 220

Karai, 43

Kargan, 67

Karrigola Station, 23

Kartar Singh, Lt., 60

Kate, 102, 103

Katruha, Shrinath, 7, 87, 89

Katha, 71, 102, 103, 104, 110

Kathawad, 136, 193

Kachar, 39, 199

Katra, 18

Karna, 8

Kavakham, 108

Kenredy, Mr., 128, 129

Khadir (Khadir), 8, 10, 36, 169, 170,  
171, 172, 176, 177, 178, 179, 180,  
182, 183, 184, 186, 187, 188, 192,  
194, 197, 199, 200, 201, 207, 208,  
209, 210, 211, 212, 214, 215, 216,  
218, 221, 222, 223, 224, 237, 253,  
265, 301, 312, 313, 314, 316

*Khadir Protection*, 180, 223, 294

*Khadir Board*, 171

*Khadir Board, Provincial*, 210

*Khadir Board, All-India*, 317

*Khadir Village*, 46

*Khadir and Village Industries Exhi-  
bition*, 31

*Kabir*, 34  
*Kabir*, 113  
*Khan Sahab, Dr.*, 306  
*Khatun*, 102  
*Kharagdeha*, 193  
*Khatola*, 5, 39, 151, 152, 160, 163, 217  
*Khatola Conference*, 179  
*Khatolik Baba*, 180  
*Kheda Bar Oriental Library*, 164, 165  
*Kheda Box*, Khan Bahadur, 185  
*Kheda Khudmatgar*, 303  
*Khanna*, 162  
*Kharb*, 96, 119, 123, 131, 132, 133, 134  
*Kharwar*, 37, 53, 265  
*Khatangay*, 10, 11, 54, 190, 200

*Lajpat Park (Bhagalpur)*, 19  
*Lakhan Rao*, 108  
*Lakhnaur*, 67  
*Lalgang*, 16, 23  
*Langaroh*, 53  
*Lanjir Rahman*, 46  
*Latha*, 125  
*Laxmi Baba*, 252, 312, 313

*M Yunes*, 33, 36  
*Madan Mohan Malaviya*, 16, 21, 32, 116  
*Madhipur*, 187  
*Madhipura*, 166  
*Madhuban*, 5  
*Madhubani*, 19, 172, 183, 218, 247  
*Madhipur*, 172, 197, 198  
*Madras*, 206, 237  
*Maganlal Gandhi*, 14, 237  
*Mahadev Dasa*, 10, 87, 222  
*Mahajan*, 110  
*Mahant Bhagar (Bhagwan) Das*, 48  
*Maharajgarh*, 213, 215  
*Maharashtra*, 237  
*Mahendra Prasad*, 17  
*Mahesh Prasad Sista*, 16  
*Mahomed*, 234  
*Mahara*, 194

*Mahmud Mahabir*, 255  
*Mahar Dasi, Shriman*, 242  
*Mase*, 52  
*Mahar Teja*, 17  
*Math*, 8  
*Math*, 208, 219  
*Math*, 23  
*Mathi Puri*, 104  
*Mathi ashur*, 105  
*Mathi*, 107, 108, 111, 112, 114, 145  
*Mathra Ballabh Sahay, Shri*, 16  
*Mathura*, 26  
*Matra Gangwan Singh*, 11  
*Matra Singh, Baba*, 1  
*Mathi*, 76  
*Matrahar*, 37, 381

## L

*Lee, Mr.*, 164  
*Lesser, Mural, Mus.*, 15, 16, 43, 242  
*Lewis, Mr.*, 102, 106  
*Lodhar Shah*, 110  
*Lohani*, 111  
*Lomra Singh*, 121  
*Lord Chelmsford*, 159  
*Lucknow*, 31, 46, 71, 75, 159

## M

*Malwa*, 213, 220, 221  
*Malwa-Ahar*, 40  
*Malwa*, 40  
*Mahdum Maneri*, 69  
*Mahdum Shah*, 40  
*Mahani*, 32, 303  
*Maharaja*, 30  
*Maharajah*, 172, 187  
*Mahani*, 74  
*Mahdum*, 166  
*Maner*, 69  
*Mangli' Tash (Patna City)*, 16, 37, 241  
*Manari*, 199  
*Manari Ghat*, 199  
*Manabehn Parikh, Smr.*, 87  
*Mansingh Rai*, 150  
*Mara*, 234  
*Mara Gandhi*, 33, 43, 45



Maratha, 17  
 Masada, 67  
 Masurki, 40, 41, 42, 43, 45, 59, 60,  
 61, 62, 64, 66, 68, 289, 291, 293,  
 297, P.8, 66, 87  
 Mathias, 194  
 Mathura Prasad, Baku, 17, 242  
 Mathura Singh, 304  
 Mathura Tewari, 46  
 Mathi Afande, 11  
 Maude, Hon'ble Mr, 96  
 Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, 7, 16,  
 31  
 Maulana Shah Sahib, 157, 159, 191  
 Maulana Shaukat Ali, 189, 206,  
 210  
 Maulvi Zubair, 179  
 Mazhar, Imam, 35, 46  
 Mazharul Haq, 1, 13, 73, 86, 144,  
 151, 152, 153, 156, 164, 240  
 Mcintosh Club, Purnea, 10  
 Mehboob Ahmed, Col, 76  
 Mira Baku, 16, 17, 242  
 Mitharua, 122  
 Mohamud, 98, 103  
 Moonghyr, 19, 20, 30, 54, 166, 168,  
 218, 220, 240, 249, 309

N. K. Roy, 184  
 Nadaul, 67  
 Nagama, 46  
 Nalpar, 164  
 Nankar, 43  
 Nal Talua, 311, 316  
 Nand Kumar Singh, 40, 42, 46  
 Nankari Faikih, 87  
 National Flag, 30  
 National College, Bihar, 143, 151, 152  
 National School, Bihar, 8, 153, 154  
 National University, Bihar, 31, 53,  
 154, 156  
 Nawadah, 54

Okra, 50  
 Orissa, 38, 130, 166

*Alaghy Secretariat Committee*, 20  
 Moulana, 4, 5, 15, 16, 77, 78, 83, 93,  
 94, 108, 110, 112, 116, 117, 121,  
 220, 242  
 Moulana Chatter, 173  
 Moulal Nohra, Pinda, 8, 29  
 Moumathara, Lord Louis, 315  
 Muldala Sarabhai, 23  
 Muhammad Ali, 7, 8, 9, 140, 151,  
 152  
 Muhammad Anwar, 36  
 Muhammad Byas, 35  
 Muhammad Tapudhin, 35,  
 Mujtahn Syed, 13  
 Mukherji Mrs, 64  
 Mukherji, 135  
*Murphy Khan*, 110  
*Muslim League*, 33, 34, 48, 52, 53, 54,  
 69, 70, 73, 268, 291, 293, 294, 303,  
 305, 309  
*Al-Azha*, 46  
*Bihar Provincial*, 54  
*Muslim Students' Federation*, 54  
 Muschikapan, 3, 4, 16, 18, 19, 73,  
 156, 159, 164, 165, 168, 171,  
 220, 221, 222, 227

## N

Nepal, 110  
 Nepal, 200  
*Nepal Tea*, 5, 78  
 Nirman, 19  
 Nirmal Kumar Bose, 33  
 Nirpada Mukherjee, 20  
 Nirvan Ashram, 26  
 Nuran Chandra Das Gupta, 20  
 Noakhali, 37, 393, 371, 373, 376,  
 379, 384, 393, 394, 399, 399,  
 397, 319, 320  
*Non-Co-operation*, 6, 143, 144, 149,  
 151, 156, 157, 159, 160, 161, 164,  
 160, 207, 231, 240, 298

## O

Oman, 180

## P

P.C. Lal, Raja, 21, 24  
 P.S. Mishra, Dr. 83  
 Padma, 30  
 Pahrata, 54, 57, 70, 280, 282, 291, 306, 307  
*Pahara Day*, 293, 294, 298  
 Palamou, 166, 167  
 Panagar, 17  
*Panchayat*, 43, 59, 60, 63, 64, 145  
 Pandaul, 207, 208, 218  
 Pandol, 171  
 Parandhaz, 41  
 Parsa, 37  
*Parasurampur*, 17  
 Paru, 284  
 Patna, 1, 2, 4, 9, 16, 17, 20, 26, 30, 29, 33, 34, 36, 37, 44, 45, 48, 50, 51, 52, 52, 54, 59, 68, 72, 73, 81, 144, 152, 153, 154, 166, 171, 184, 185, 187, 212, 217, 238, 239, 240, 243, 279, 295, 308, 313, 319  
*Patna City*, 8, 12, 36, 284, 284  
*Patna District Congress Committee*, 40  
*Patna District Akashin Students' Federation*, 38  
*Peepah*, 121, 123  
*Phahar Akash*, 38, 37, 38  
 Pioneer, 130  
 Pipawan, 44, 395  
 Plamra, 120, 121, 123, 130, 131, 133, 134, 135, 136, 143,

*Plamra' Association*, 77, 85, 160  
*Plamra' Association, District*, 101  
*Police-men's Association*, 51  
 Poona, 87, 252  
 Postnoon, 41, 43  
*Prabharati Devi, Shriam*, 242  
 Prabhunath Singh, 17  
 Prayapati Mishra, Shri, 258  
 Pura, 20  
*Pura Conference*, 52, 59, 117, 129, 131  
*Purason*, 34, 49  
*Purbi Raj*, 242  
*Purbiel Congress Committee, Bihar*, 171, 300  
*Purbiel Political Conference*, 1  
 Pukha, 89  
 Pundalik, 87  
 Purnak, 20  
*Purush*, 6, 47, 149, 160, 202, 204, 285, 286, 288, 297, 300, 302, 306, 311  
*Purush Day*, 291, 295, 296  
*Puri*, 19, 187  
 Puri, 73, 73  
 Purna, 10, 11, 21, 22, 23, 24, 166, 190, 201  
*Purnanda Narayan Senha*, 129  
*Purula*, 26, 177, 178, 179, 180, 181  
 Pyare Lal, 242

## Q

Qazi Ahmed Hussain Nazim, 36

## R

R.D. Tana, 173, 175, 176  
 Radhakrishna, 14, 237  
 Radha Mahan Singh, 20  
 Radhika Ramnan Prasad Senha, Raja, 27, 279  
*Radhika Sena Juthar*, 29  
 Rahmatganj, 41  
 Rainy, Sh., 120  
*Rany Girder*, 164, 165  
*Rajast (Raj)*, 2, 4, 5, 72, 75, 82,

83, 85, 86, 90, 91, 92, 93, 96, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 125, 126, 127, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134, 135, 136, 138, 140  
*Rajagopalachari*, 269  
*Rajabandhu*, 224  
*Rajendra Prasad, Dr.*, 3, 6, 15, 16,

17, 21, 24, 30, 32, 34, 35, 73, 74,  
75, 83, 85, 148, 153, 156, 169,  
172, 183, 190, 200, 207, 209, 212,  
222, 223, 239, 243, 242, 244, 245,  
248, 251, 258, 269, 273, 305  
Raghu, 45  
Ragunath Shukla, 3, 4, 71, 72, 73,  
74, 77, 79  
Ragunath, 19, 246  
Rajini Prasad Singh, 29  
Ramanand, Baba, 157, 167  
Ramanand Mishra, 14, 237  
Ramanand Tripathy, 51  
Ranjana, 47, 165, 274, 275, 300  
Ramesh Mishra, 26  
Ram Bala, Rampur, 19  
Ramdeo Singh, 17  
Rampur, 31, 263, 267  
Ramkrishna Das Adnan, 10

S Noor, 17  
S K. Rao, 84  
S. Sridha, Dr., 3, 36  
S K. Sahas, 140  
S M. Ismail, 34  
S N. Singh, 46  
Saharman, 14, 207  
Sahyad Adnan, 3, 249  
Sain, 41, 67, 294  
Sakal Baba, 46  
Sakal, 218  
Sakragolghar, 189  
Samaspur, 214  
Santosh, 30, 37, 243, 248, 249  
Santosh Dharma, 247  
Santosh, 185  
Santal Insurance Co., 1  
Santal Pargana, 54, 191  
Sargan, 159  
Saraya, 125, 151, 153, 154, 155, 156  
Saran, 156, 157, 165  
Saraya, 218  
Sardar, J. J. Singh, 43  
Sardar Nuhul Sahas, 269  
Sari, 87  
Sarnawa, 101  
Sasaram, 8, 166

Ramnarayan Singh, 16  
Ramaswami Prasad, 3, 74, 85  
Ramakrishna, Brahmanachari, 146  
Ramnath Chhatnam, 108  
Rampur, 45  
Rancho, 4, 28, 110, 114, 121, 140,  
141, 168, 182, 183, 184  
Rangpur, 83  
Rao, Mr., 115  
Rasulpur, 46  
Rasool Bazar, 10  
Relief Camp, 67  
Relief Commissioner, 35,  
Relief Officer, 64, 65, 66  
Reuben, Mr. Junior, 307  
Rishi, 153  
Round Table Conference, 270  
Riza, Mr. 50, 244

# S

Salt Satyagrah, 15  
Satyagrah, 251, 252, 253, 256, 257,  
258, 261, 262, 267, 283, 301, 310  
Satyagrah, 254, 255, 257, 296  
Satish Chandra Das Gupta, 203, 209  
Satya Narayan Lal, 1  
Saturaj Prasad Singh, 27  
Saur, 56, 97, 100, 114, 128, 132,  
133, 134, 135  
Searchlight, 16, 144, 279  
Season of Asha Sorey, 6, 88, 116,  
126  
Sethi, Mr., 175  
Sewari, 217, 229  
Shahabad, 8, 166  
Shahabad District Anti-Unrest-  
study League, 27  
Shafi Daud, Maulvi, 37  
Shahura, 19, 29, 234  
Shantabad, 47  
Shah Nawaz, Major General, 37,  
43, 45, 59, 60, 294, 320  
Shah Omari, 46  
Shah Omir Mustafa, 40, 42  
Shahood Sahrawady, 293, 304,  
307

Shakti, 187  
 Shamlihu Saran Verma, 3, 81  
 Shanker, Mrs., 67  
 Shankar Ali Maulana, 7, 244, 151  
 Sharadindu Bha, 96, 99, 111, 113,  
 118, 119, 120, 121, 131,  
 Shangan, 3  
 Sharangpur, 92, 135  
 Shearatan, 123  
 Shetkeshan Sahay, 20  
 Shetkeshan Saisa, Dr., 20, 34  
 Shreebharadwaj, 217, 230  
 Shuddh work, 216, 217  
 Shyam Narayan Sahay, 46  
 Sikha, 39, 60, 268, 281, 290  
 Singbhoom, 166  
 Sirka, Hon. Mr., 223  
 Sirka, Lord, 156, 158, 223  
 Sipara, 37  
 Siraha, 123  
 Sutan, 93  
 Sura Concerts, 129, 133, 134  
 Sutaracha, 10, 18, 136, 144, 146, 246  
 Sutaran Treaty, 108

Tamil, 188  
 Tarakshwar Ray, 10  
 Tara Prasmata Das Gupta, 10, 21  
 Tarn Prasad, 17  
 Tarna, 96, 97, 99, 103, 110, 114, 119,  
 121, 131  
 Thakoor Sahib, 253  
 Thalpara, 43  
 Thana, 49, 59, 62, 63, 160  
 Thana, 163  
 Thana Khan, 119

United Press of India, 53  
 United Provinces, 188, 202, 235  
 University, 7, 46, 153

Vaidyanath Dham, 191  
 Vaisa, 17, 71, 73, 74, 75, 76, 83, 84,  
 85, 93, 125  
 Vice-Chairman, 3, 17, 26  
 Vice-Chancellor, 34, 43, 133

Shwan, 214  
 Wade, Miss, 15  
 Sinata, General, 266  
 Sobhani Khan, 49  
 Soodoor, 293  
 Sonam, Mr., 123  
 Sone, 218  
 Sonapur, 17, 18, 202, 215, 248  
 Still, Mr., 94  
 Simard, 19  
 Soodarh, 136, 150, 155, 157, 163  
 Soorg, 6, 8, 150, 170, 206, 238, 253,  
 266, 312  
 Soorg Akram, 178  
 Soorgpur Party, 28  
 Sweeney, Mr., 120, 121  
 Syed Akhtul Anis, 53, 56, 57  
 Syed Ahmad, Sir, 238  
 Syed Ahmad Husein, 33,  
 Syed Akhtul Ahmad, 58  
 Syed Jaffer Hussain, 35, 54  
 Syed Mahmud, Dr., 17, 33, 34, 37,  
 272

## T

Tamasha, 110  
 Takapan, 34  
 Talasha, 71, 73, 91, 96, 97, 103,  
 114, 116, 119, 128, 129, 131, 132,  
 134  
 Tipperah, 33  
 Tufat, 74, 77, 100  
 Tala Goppara Ramsingh Chhatani,  
 169  
 Tuladai, 26, 256, 259, 274  
 Tuskada (Tuskada), 121, 123

## U

Urdu, 36, 43, 76, 134, 185  
 Ushan Khan, 40

## V

Vaidyanand, 161  
 Vaidyanandan Prasad, 3, 85  
 Vainpur (Vatanpur), 10, 291  
 Vicroy, 58, 81



BOOKS OF GANDHIJI  
Published by  
THE NAVJIVAN PUBLISHING HOUSE  
AHMEDABAD

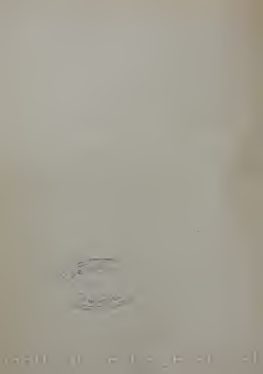
An Autobiography	7-0-0
Satyagraha in South Africa	4-8-0
Hind Swaraj	0-8-0
Cent Per Cent Swadeshi (Enlarged Edition)	2-0-0
Constructive Programme—Its Meaning & Place	0-6-0
Non-violence in Peace and War, Vol. I	7-0-0
Women & Social Injustice (Enlarged Edition)	3-0-0
Gandhi's Correspondence with the Government (1942-44)	2-8-0
From Yashoda Mandir	0-8-0
Self-Restraint v Self-Indulgence (Enlarged Edition)	2-0-0
Delhi Diary	2-0-0
The Nation's Voice	3-0-0
Key to Health	0-10-0
Economics of Khadi	
The Indian States' Problem	
Christian Missions—Their Place in India	

















10 FEB 1969







10 FEB 1969

GANDHI  
SPEECHES  
WRITINGS